TOP 50

SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC

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INTRODUCTION

Here we are again with another list of the 50 best programs for Sinclair machines released over the past 12 months. We did it for the first time last November, with a list of the all-time greats, and this booklet takes over where that one left off.

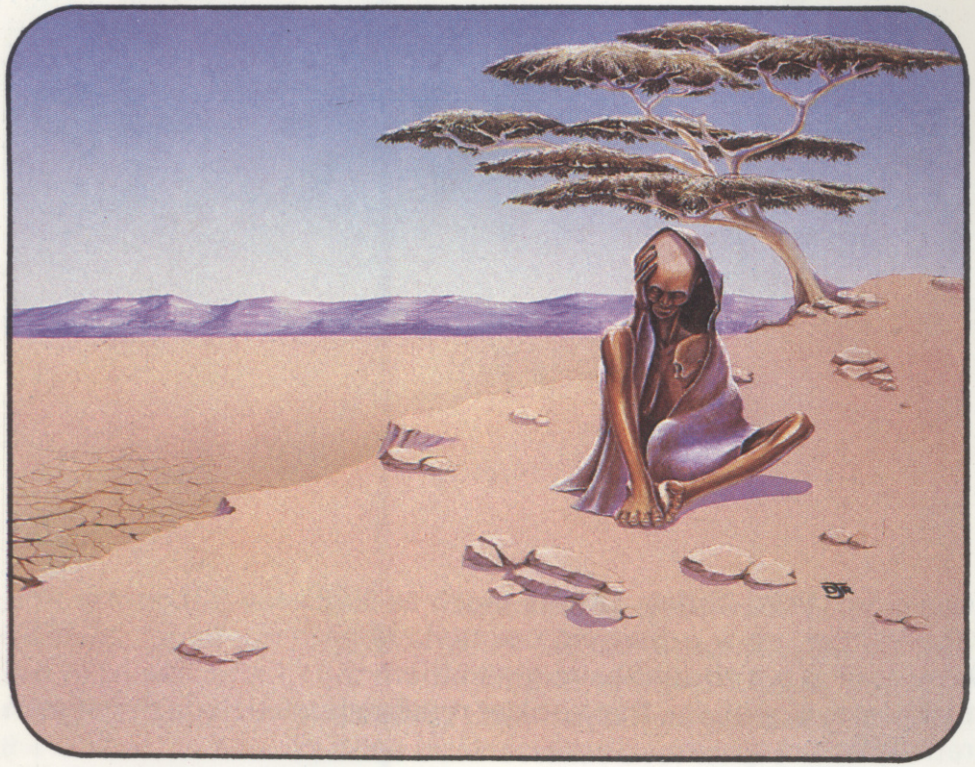
There are a number of changes. Last year we drove each other nuts trying to order the programs from the very best to the merely exceptional. This time we are leaving well alone. How do you compare programs like **Dun Darach** and **Daley Thompson's Decathlon**, **Dam Busters** and **Doomdark's Revenge**?

We have also included utilities, and QL programs for the first time, as well as the odd business package. Why should those programmers miss out on the glory?

Not all the software in the booklet has been awarded a *Sinclair User* Classic. Some were released before we introduced the Classic stamp, such as **System 15000** or **Deus Ex Machina** – both programs would certainly deserve the accolade if we were reviewing them today. Others, such as **Highway Encounter** and **Spy vs Spy**, have grown on our reviewers to the extent that we now reckon we should have given them the Classic award in the first place. Hopefully, this booklet renders justice done to those in retrospect.

These are the games no Sinclair user should be without. There is an order to our list – arcade, strategy, simulation, adventure, utility – but it's pretty vague. How do you classify **Frankie Goes to Hollywood**, or **Shadowfire**? The last year has broken down so many of the old categories that it is becoming silly to talk about arcade games or adventure games. Long may that process continue – because the products which have emerged in the last year have provided us, and hopefully you, with superb entertainment.

So enjoy our choices and let us know where you think we've goofed. Half the fun of lists is working out your own alternatives! If you have a particular favourite you feel should have been included, then write to us, with your reasons, and the best will be published in the magazine.

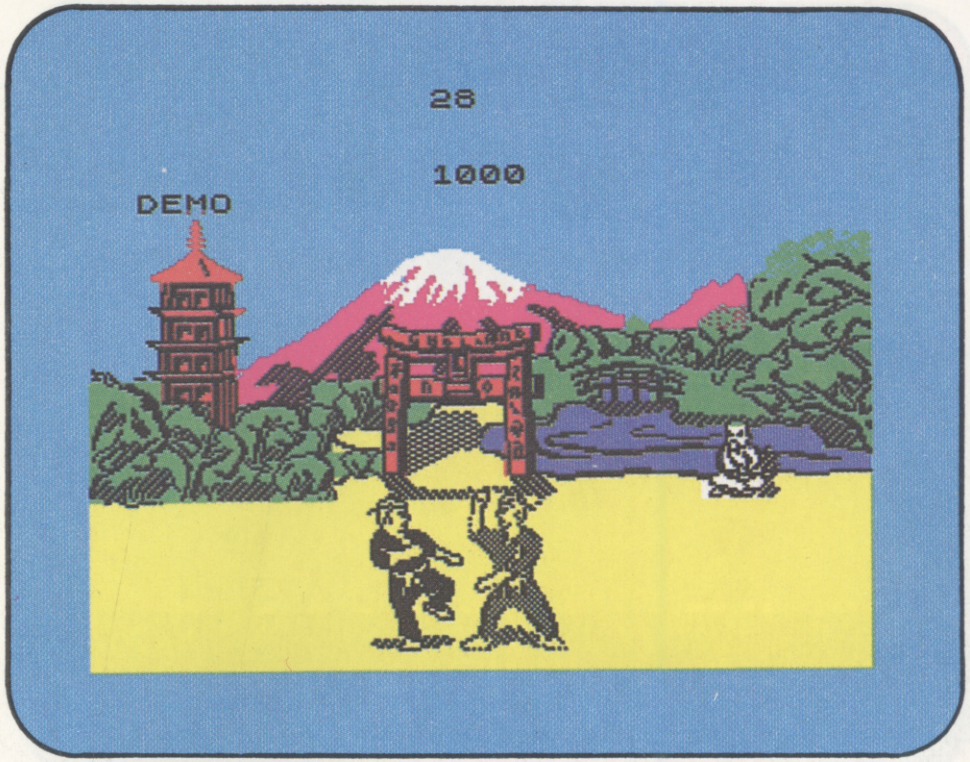


SOFTAID
Various

With the exception of the 1984 classic **Ant Attack**, almost none of the programs on this compilation tape is outstanding. And yet the sum is greater than its parts.

Masterminded by ex-Quicksilva supremo Rod Cousens, **Softaid** was launched in February and remained in the top ten throughout the summer, raising, by August, well over £350,000 for the Ethiopian Famine Appeal. The 10 games on the Spectrum version – **Spellbound, Starbike, Kokotoni Wilf, The Pyramid, Horace Goes Skiing, Gilligan's Gold, Ant Attack, 3D Tank Duel, Jack and the Beanstalk** and **Sorcery** – cost a mere £4.99.

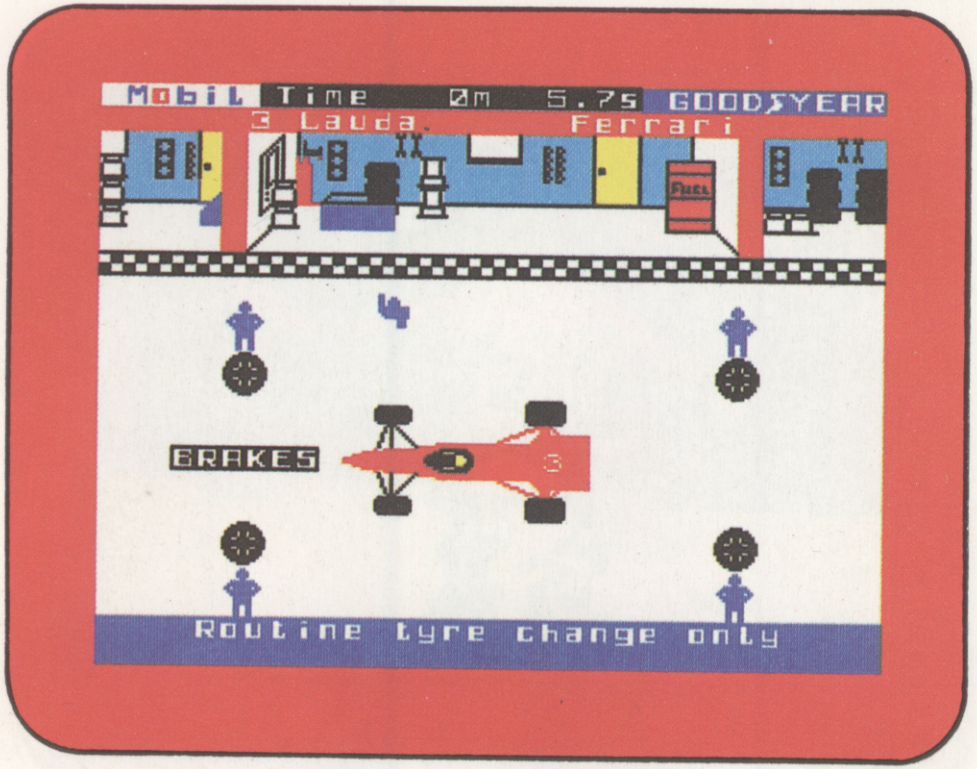
One of the first collections ever released, **Softaid** could arguably be judged the most important games tape of 1985.



WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST
Melbourne House

Kung fu fans will love this karate simulation. Sixteen different movements give a fine selection of kicks, punches, jabs, somersaults and spectacular leaps and turns. Some can be combined for exotic moves of great difficulty.

Superb animation, supported by suitably oriental backgrounds, lend atmosphere to the game, but it's the system which counts. Luckily the joystick is so organised as to make it very easy to learn the moves. Then all you have to do is beat your opponent. That's not so easy – the computer displays considerable cunning after the first few levels, and always seems to be thinking four moves ahead.

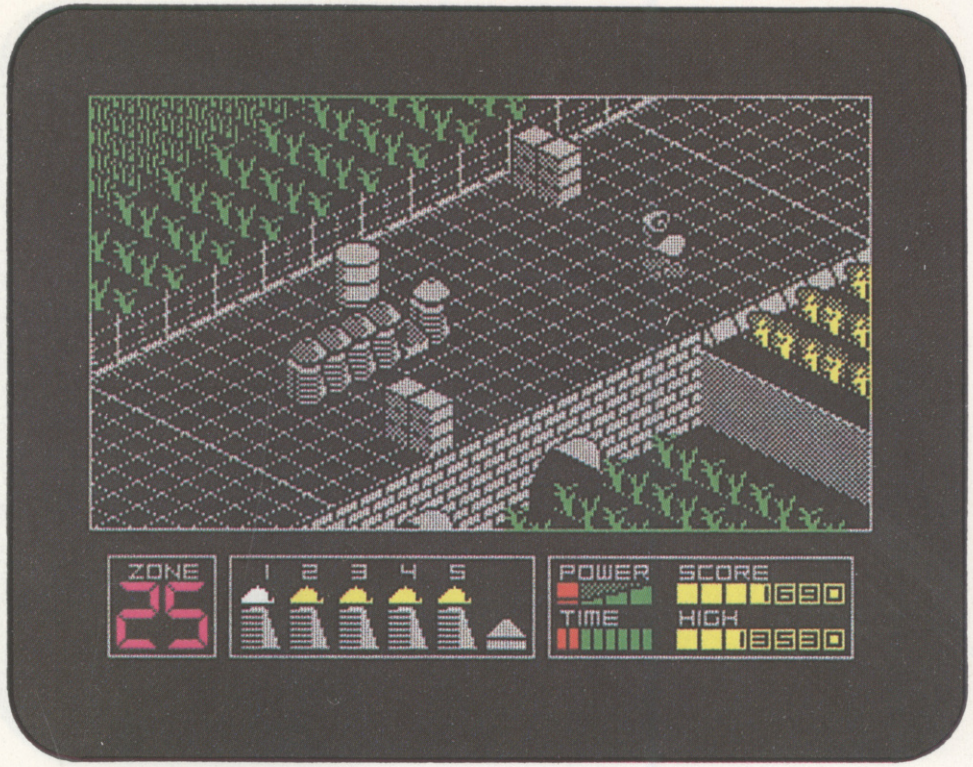


FORMULA 1
CRL

The only game of its type to rival the classic **Football Manager, Formula One** puts you in charge of a Grand Prix team. First find sponsors, then allocate funds to your car design, drivers and crew.

Choose tyres to suit the weather and watch as the race unfolds with excellent and realistic graphics. Leader board and race reports help with your decisions, but pitstops are handled with the joystick as you rush your mechanic around the four wheels as quickly as you can.

A finely-balanced game for one to six players – really exciting and very convincing.

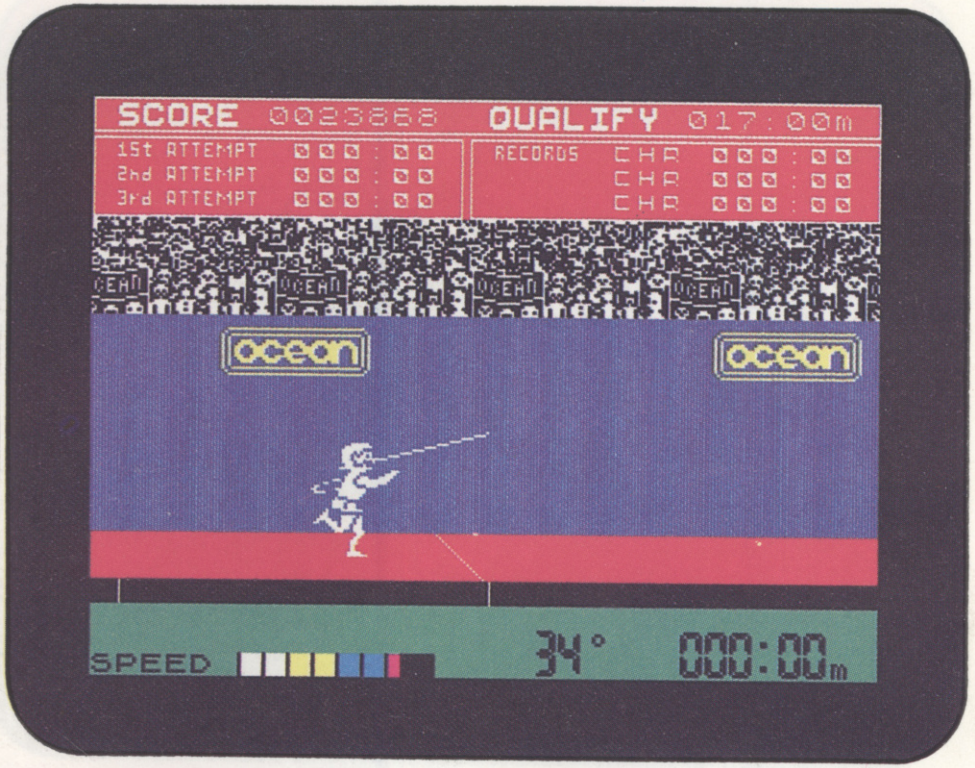


HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER
Vortex

A masterpiece of 3D graphics programming from Costa Panyai of **TLL** fame. This time you must guide a bomb down the highway to the alien base. You've five little daleks to help but beware – if the aliens slip past they may destroy the other four before you get a chance to use them.

Cunningly placed obstacles make this much more than a zap game, requiring logic and strategy. The bomb moves on its own – sometimes it must be blocked for a while, only to be released when the way is clear.

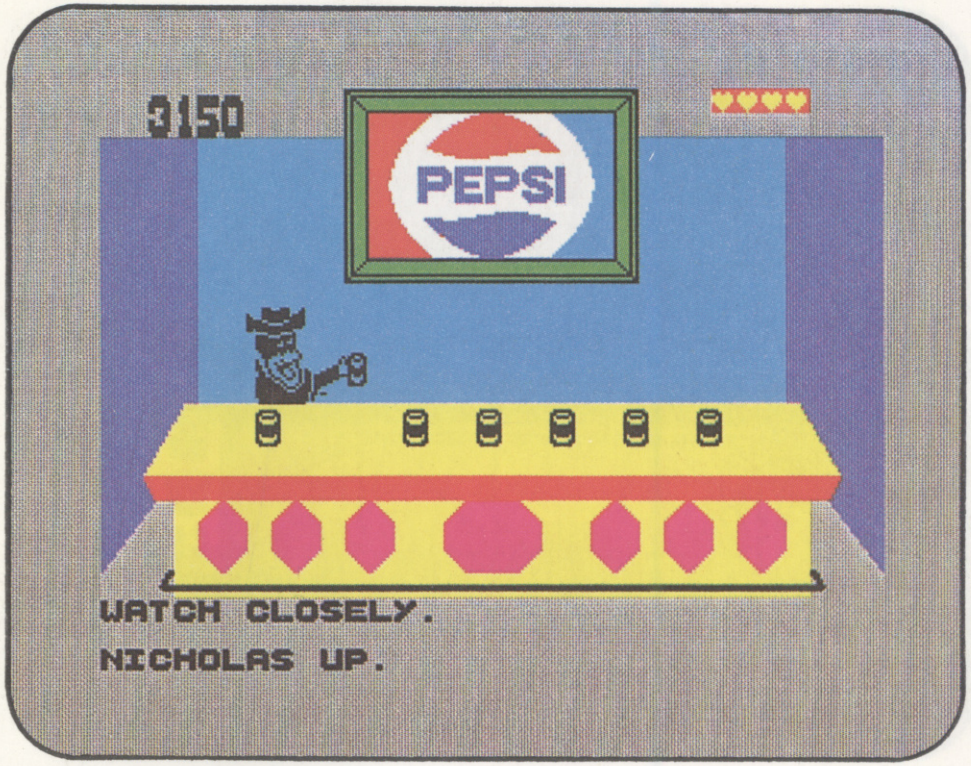
Smooth, impressive, addictive – and fun to watch as well.



DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON *Ocean*

The all-jumping running vaulting throwing Daley Thompson was an incredible success with arcade game players. Based on a number of coin-op games, it takes the Olympic star through all 10 Decathlon events and introduced the highly physical joystick pump technique for acceleration. Because the on-screen action relates to real sporting events, the game has more atmosphere than many later copies, although the graphics now seem a little crude.

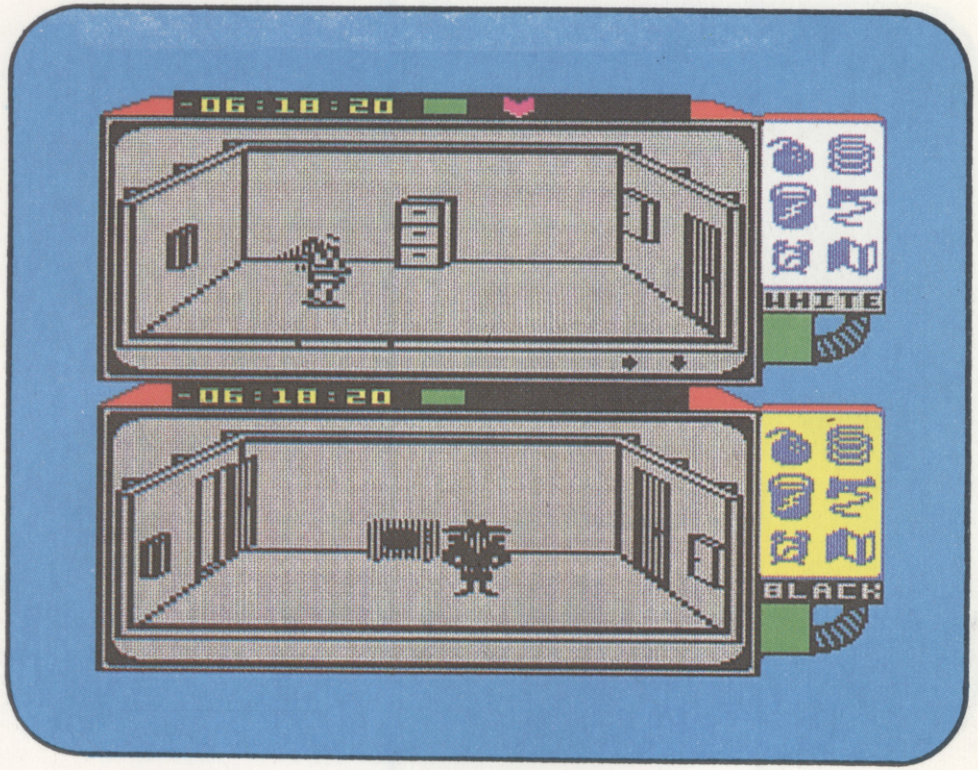
Daley was also the first game to be promoted successfully by a public figure. Many other companies jumped on the bandwagon but few achieved comparable success.



TAPPER *US Gold*

This sweetly unpretentious arcade game from the US earns its place for sheer infectious fun. You're the help at the Soda Fountain, and you've got to keep those foaming mugs of fizz flowing. As the bar fills up, so the tension mounts – one customer kept waiting too long, one empty thrown on the floor and you're fired.

Stylish touches include a floorshow of dancers when you get a tip – customers turn to watch, giving you a breather. The graphics are hardly state-of-the-art, but somehow that doesn't seem to matter, the action's hilarious and infuriatingly addictive.

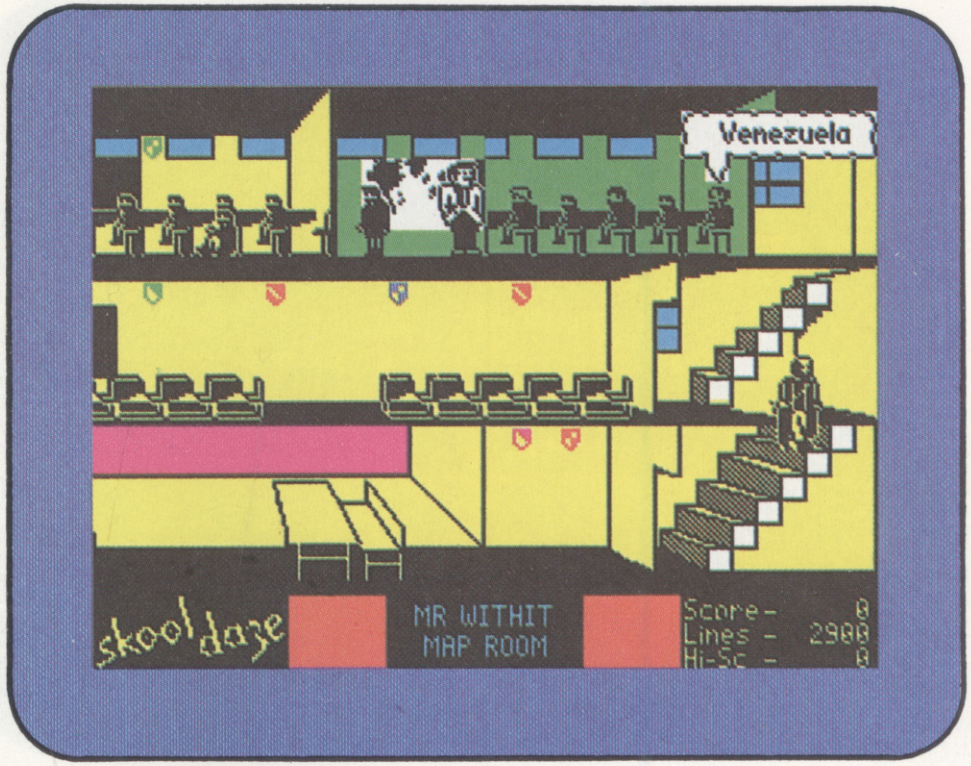


SPY VS SPY
Beyond

Firmly based on the graphic style and peculiar humour of the long-running *MAD* magazine cartoon, this is one of the very few spinoffs which has remained faithful to the source material.

The game is unique in employing a split-screen which allows two to play simultaneously. While ransacking a foreign embassy you attempt to foil your opponent by laying booby traps, using an icon-driven trapulator at the side of the screen. Then you escape with the documents and diplomatic bag.

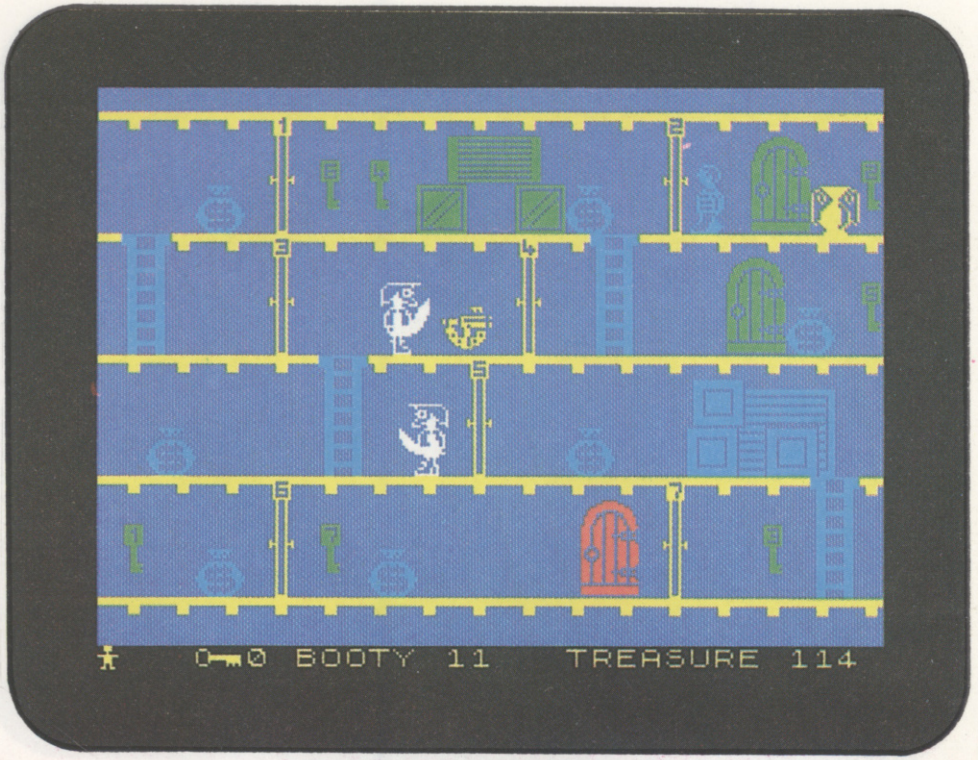
A frustrating but addictive game it is one of the more successful conversions from the Commodore 64, and a sequel is to follow shortly.



SKOOLDAZE
Microsphere

Eric is the baddest boy in the school, and the beak has his report locked up in the safe. Eric must attend lessons, avoid lines, beat up the swot, be squashed by the bully, indulge in wild catapult fights and stay away from kids with the measles.

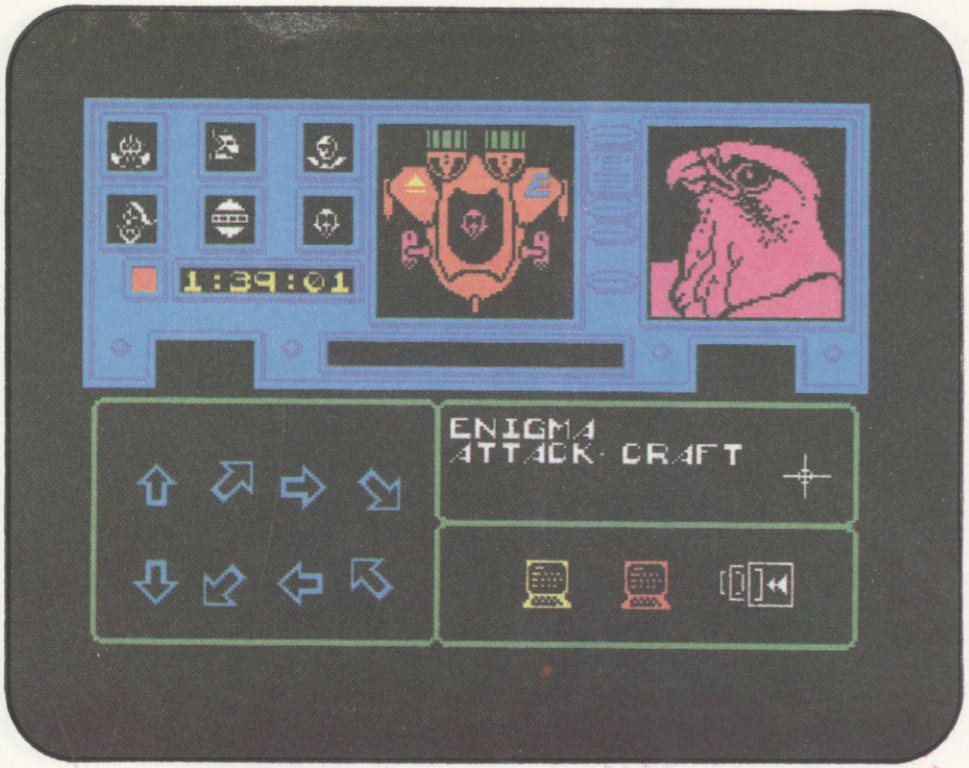
This novel arcade game has all the flavour of an old-fashioned comic with some remarkable surreal touches. To get the combination of the safe you'll need to be a dab hand at hitting the school shields, as well as wizard at dates of famous battles. Manic fun with the promise of a sequel soon.



BOOTY
Firebird

The ghosts of old pirates shiver in their timbers as you embark on a search for gold booty in the pirate ship. Firebird's game is a levels and ladders production with an exceedingly intricate construction. Keys open doors into new holds, lifts and ladders help you avoid the rats and rotting decks spell disaster.

Highly addictive, **Booty** earns its place by virtue of its price – an amazing £2.50 – far and away the most successful budget game, and more fun than most at three times that price. It's still a favourite with many players, and very difficult to beat too.

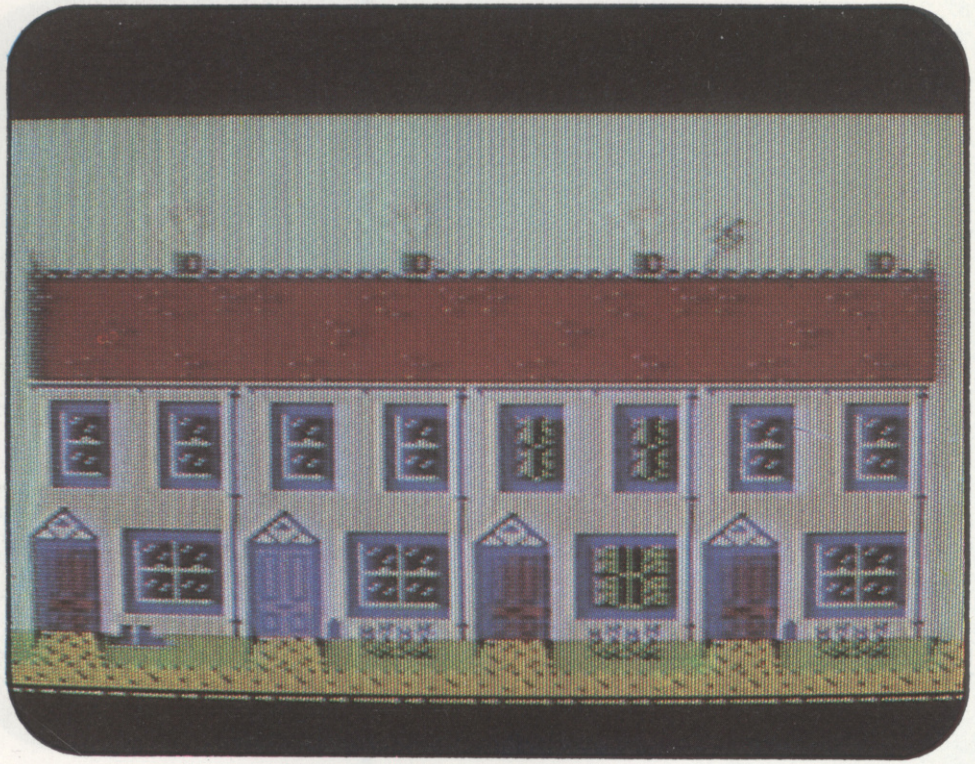


SHADOWFIRE
Beyond

In 1985 the fine lines dividing adventure from arcade games became so blurred as to be redundant. **Shadowfire** dealt a mortal blow with its icon-driven strategic approach, doing away with text input altogether.

That had its drawbacks – one of which was the need for an extensive instruction booklet – but once grasped the system is remarkably easy to use. You control the six members of the Enigma force whose mission is to attack the guards of Zoff V and rescue Ambassador Kryxix.

An innovative game, **Shadowfire** has been further enhanced with the **Shadowfire Tuner** utility which enables you to create new scenarios, with the odds stacked for or against you.

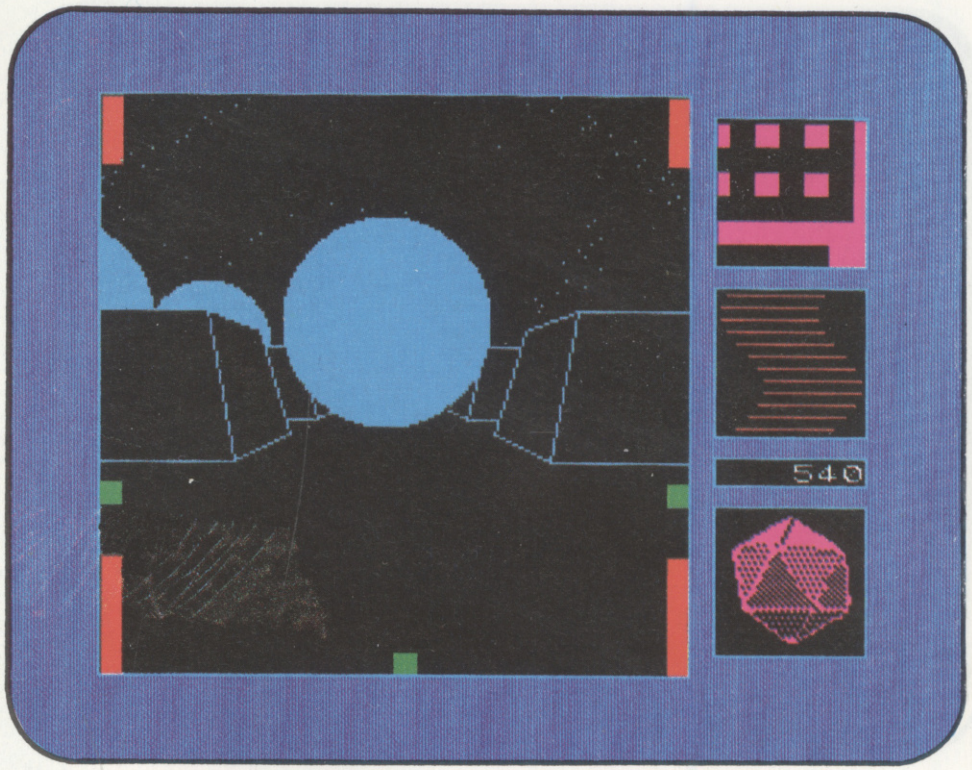


FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD *Ocean*

Arcade magic based on the Liverpool pop group, and full of the style and symbolism of their music. The object – to become 100 per cent human and earn the ultimate pleasure experience.

In the meantime, wander through Mundanesville, collecting objects from the houses which open doors into the pleasure dome. In the pleasure dome, play mini-arcade games based on the group's hit singles. See Reagan spit at Andropov, shoot Thatcher and Scargill, solve a murder mystery – and you've still not seen half of the action.

Included with the game is a version of the hit single *Relax*. This is one spin-off which really does work.

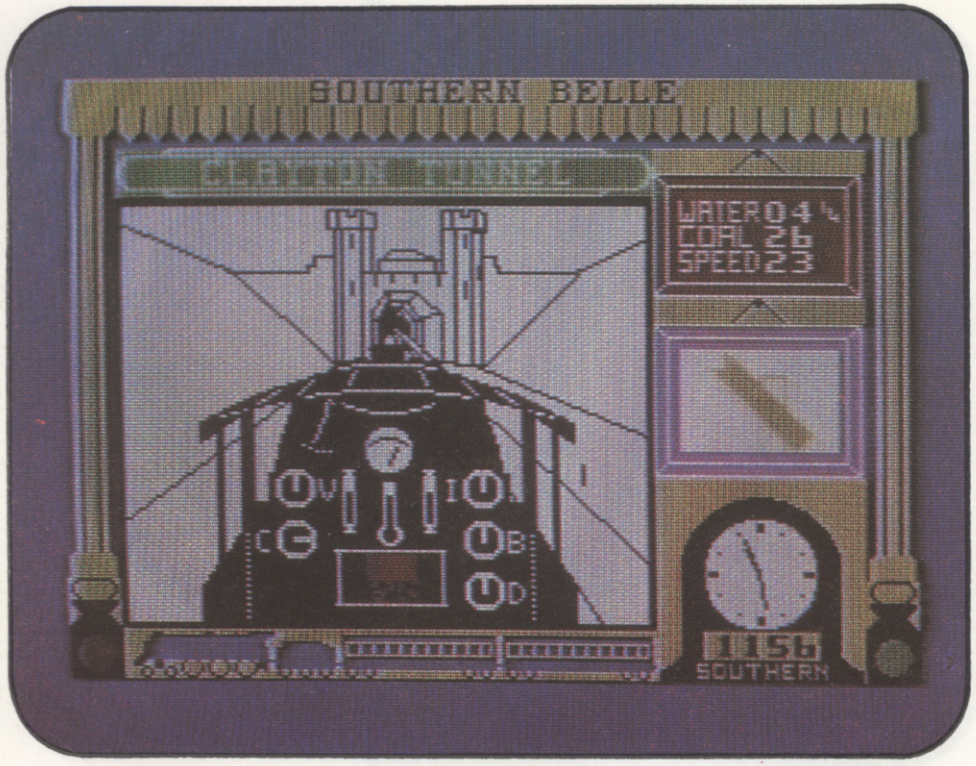


GYRON *Firebird*

Gyron defies description and consequently met with mixed feelings from both press and public.

A maze scenario disguises a challenging strategy game in which you must reach the founts of wisdom hidden within the Necropolis labyrinth which, in turn, nestles within the outer Atrium labyrinth. Giant spheres roll along the corridors, and rising above the walls are the Towers, guarding the maze and always ready to retaliate. Attacking the towers may cause them to turn, vanish or reappear elsewhere.

Ingenious programming techniques were employed, avoiding attribute clash by the rapid interchanging of alternate displays.

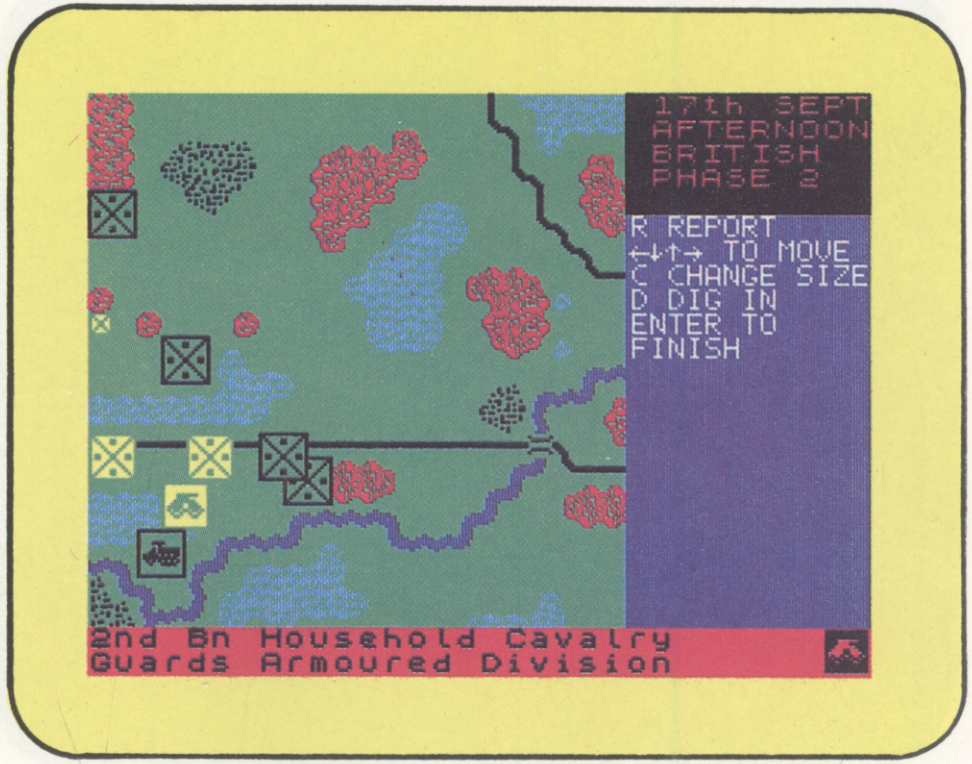


SOUTHERN BELLE

Hewson Consultants

Without doubt the finest simulation of the past year, **Southern Belle** takes you on a train ride from London to Brighton during the age of steam. You play the part of driver and fireman – and it's a complex operation. Keeping the boiler stoked, using the brakes, blowing the whistle, and many other features combine to keep you busy for the whole trip.

There are schedules to follow, and a number of training levels for the beginner. Graphics are pleasing too, with wireframe stations and signal boxes, and a number of real-life landmarks, such as Battersea Power Station, portrayed for added realism. Just as difficult as flight simulations, and much more fun to watch.

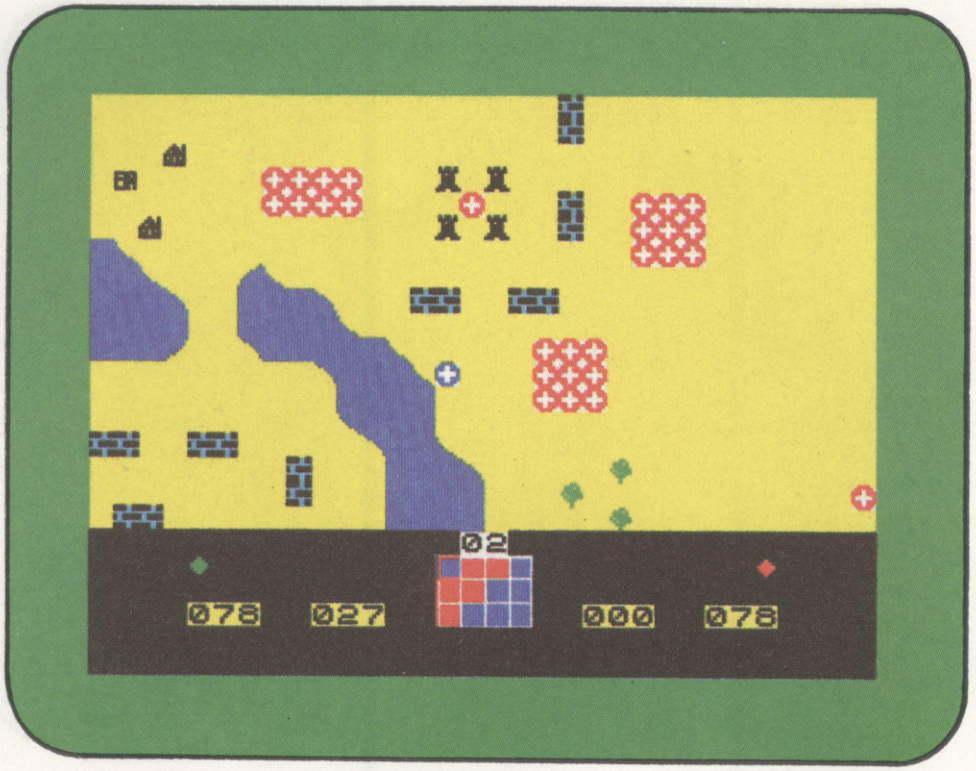


ARNHEM

CCS

Best of the year's wargames, **Arnhem** is a one, two or three player simulation of the famous WWII battle for the Rhine bridges. Highly sophisticated movement systems – cursor controlled – lend realism and ease of play to the game. There's a choice of scenarios to suit all levels of play.

The spirit of the original campaign is well captured – American paratroopers hold the bridges while the British attempt to organise a swift advance down narrow roads. The German task is to prevent the yanks from holding the outposts and slow the main advance past the game's time limits.

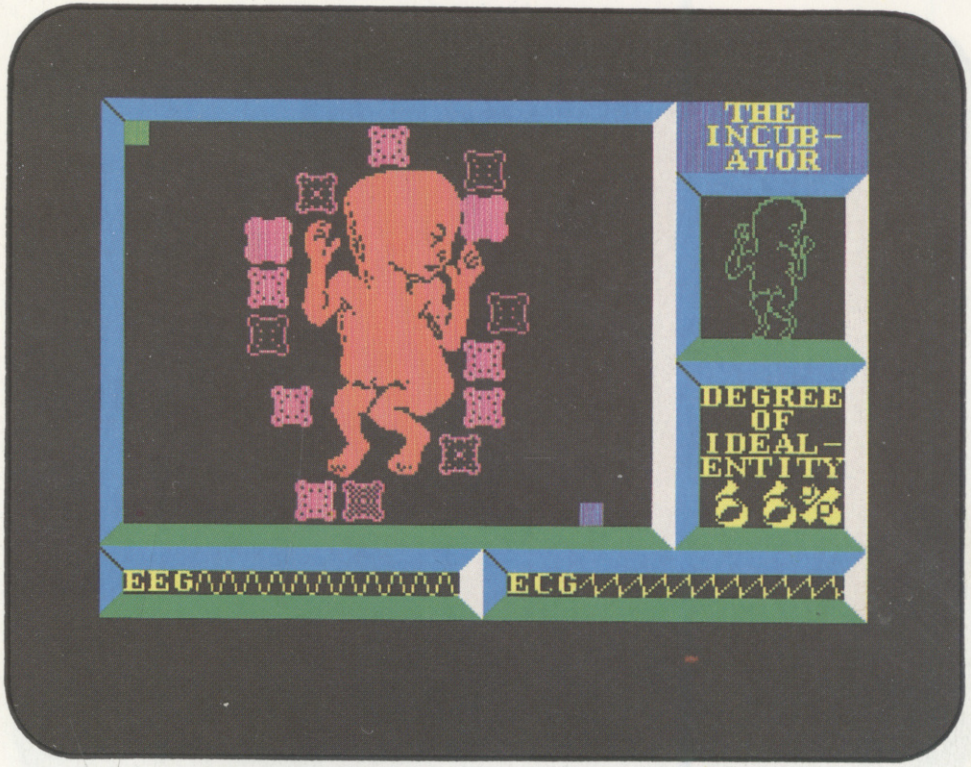


OVERLORDS
Lothlorien

Two-player wargames are usually slow and boring. Not **Overlords**. Abstract in flavour, you capture cities to force victory across nine screens. Movement is simultaneous and very fast – double joysticks are required for ideal play, though you could get by with one, and one player on the keyboard.

The play's so fast and furious that the confusion of real war is well mimicked – as you try desperately to mount a telling charge or flanking movement, your opponent is already behind your lines.

Well worthwhile if you've a friend to play with, and one of the few wargames which really couldn't work as a boardgame.

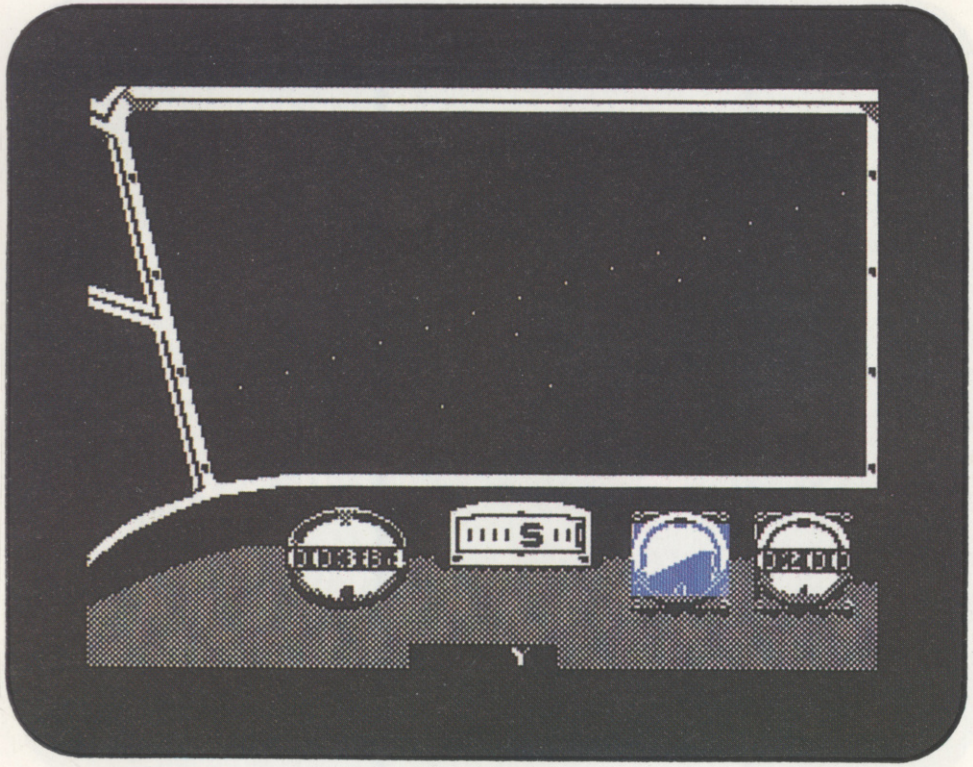


DEUS EX MACHINA
Automata

"The first original audio-visual entertainment since the computer revolution," is how author Mel Croucher describes **Deus ex Machina**. To others it is an unhappy, superficial, marriage of rock album, arcade game and simplistic philosophy.

The game follows the struggle for existence against a hostile and authoritarian future controlled by computer and defect police. A full soundtrack features the varied talents of Ian Dury, Jon Pertwee, E P Thompson, Frankie Howard and others.

Shunned by distributors and public, loved by the critics, Deus might one day come to be regarded as the software equivalent of the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper*.

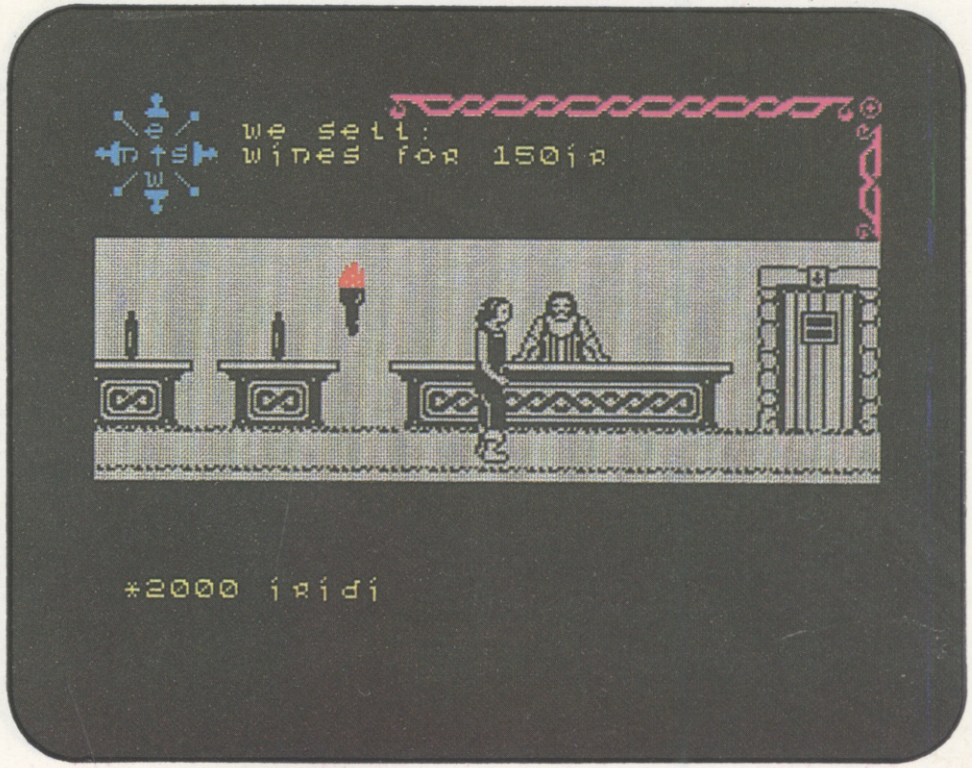


DAM BUSTERS
US Gold

Taking control of a Lancaster bomber, you must become the pilot, navigator, bomb aimer and flight engineer. If there is any trouble from enemy aircraft or guns on the ground, you must also become the front and rear gunners.

Taking your aircraft in over Europe you must find the dams and destroy them. Maps are provided for the navigator and instrument panels for the engineer.

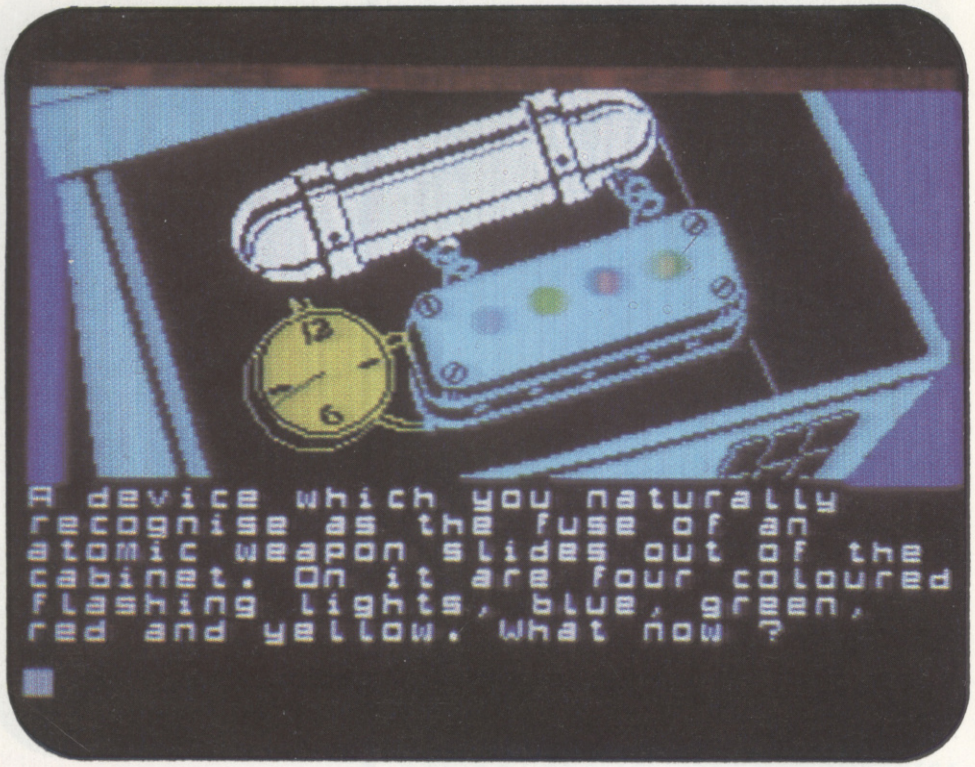
For the pilot and gunners the arcade action sequences provide the action. Searchlights cross your path, barrage balloons hamper flight and enemy craft come in for the kill. Even if you do not make it to one dam the excitement of the flight should be enough.



DUN DARACH
Gargoyle

Stunning animation and brilliant game design combine to recreate the world of celtic hero Cuchullain. **Tir Na Nog** found him seeking the seal of Calum in the land of the dead while battling the faery Sidhe. **Dun Darach** takes him into an enchanted city to free his friend Loeg from Skar the sorceress.

Dun Darach is probably the best adventure game ever released for the Spectrum. Upwards of a dozen independent characters to be won over, loads of visual problems to be worked out and a living to be made – trading, thieving, running errands, bribing – while Loeg rots in captivity and Skar savours revenge.

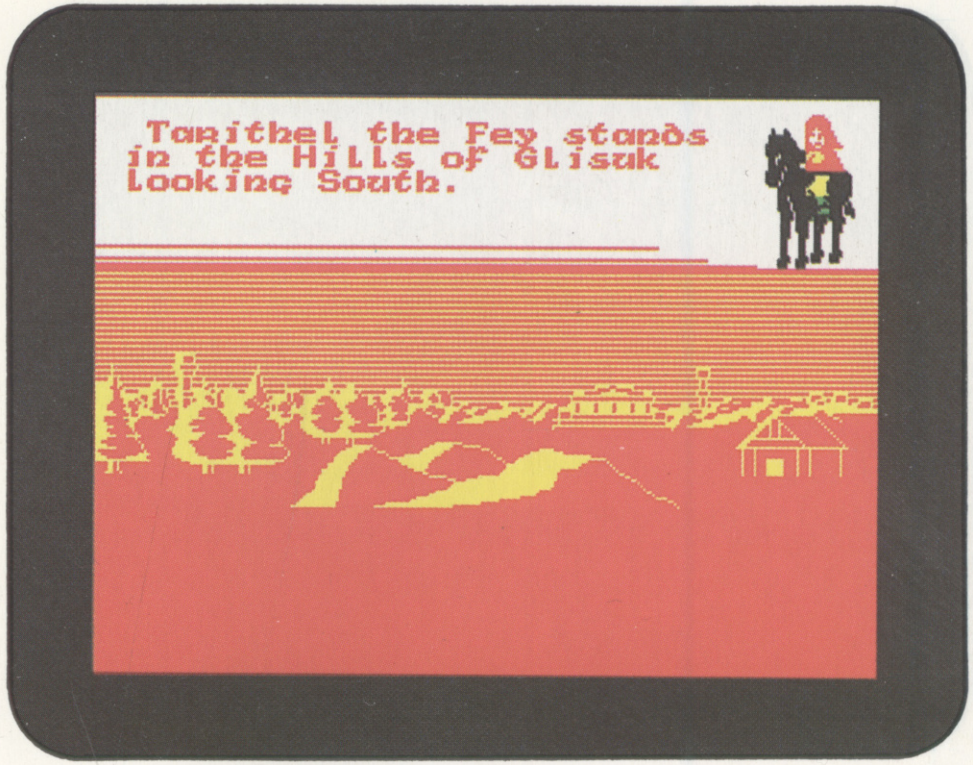

A device which you naturally
recognise as the fuse of an
atomic weapon slides out of the
cabinet. On it are four coloured
flashing lights, blue, green,
red and yellow. What now ?

THE FOURTH PROTOCOL

Century/Hutchinson

Part adventure, part arcarde, part strategy, **The Fourth Protocol** heralded a new generation of icon-driven games software.

As MI5 agent John Preston you use the manpower at your disposal, together with the computer databanks, to uncover a KGB plot to detonate a nuclear device in Britain. The fast detailed graphics realistically depict your office terminal, memos, reports and voice prints, and there is a suitably apocalyptic finale if you should fail. The only weak element in an otherwise impressive piece of programming is the lapse into traditional verb/noun adventure format towards the end of the game.

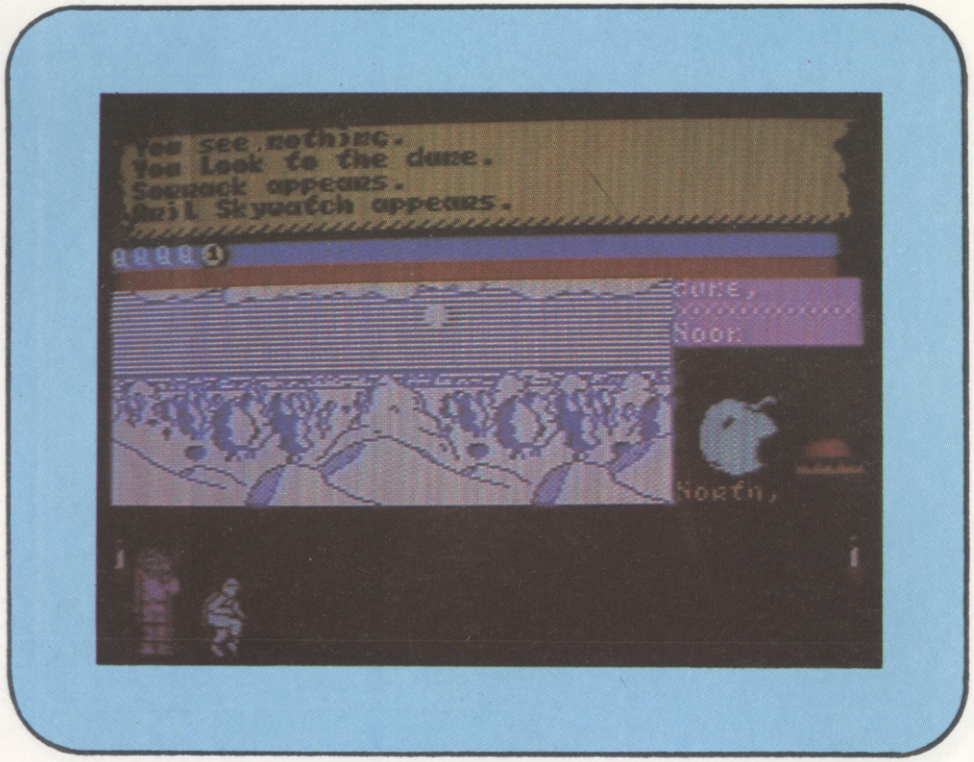


DOOMDARK'S REVENGE

Beyond

Mike Singleton's epic fantasy wargame, **Lords of Midnight**, was one of the finest games of 1984. The sequel, **Doomdark's Revenge**, is even more massive with 48,000 views of the landscape and scores of independent characters to deal with.

You are Luxor the Moonprince, riding to rescue your son Morkin from Shareth the Heartstealer. Raise armies from races diverse as dwarfs, giants, elves, barbarians and icelords – all have their own interests, and you may need to undertake special quests to win them over. Very complicated, not for novices – but fans of Midnight need no urging.



SORDERON'S SHADOW

Beyond

Beyond pushed back the frontiers of adventure games with **Lords of Midnight** and **Doomdark's Revenge**. **Sorderon's Shadow** represents a further innovative onslaught, discarding the military elements of the earlier games in favour of traditional text input coupled with multi-directional graphics.

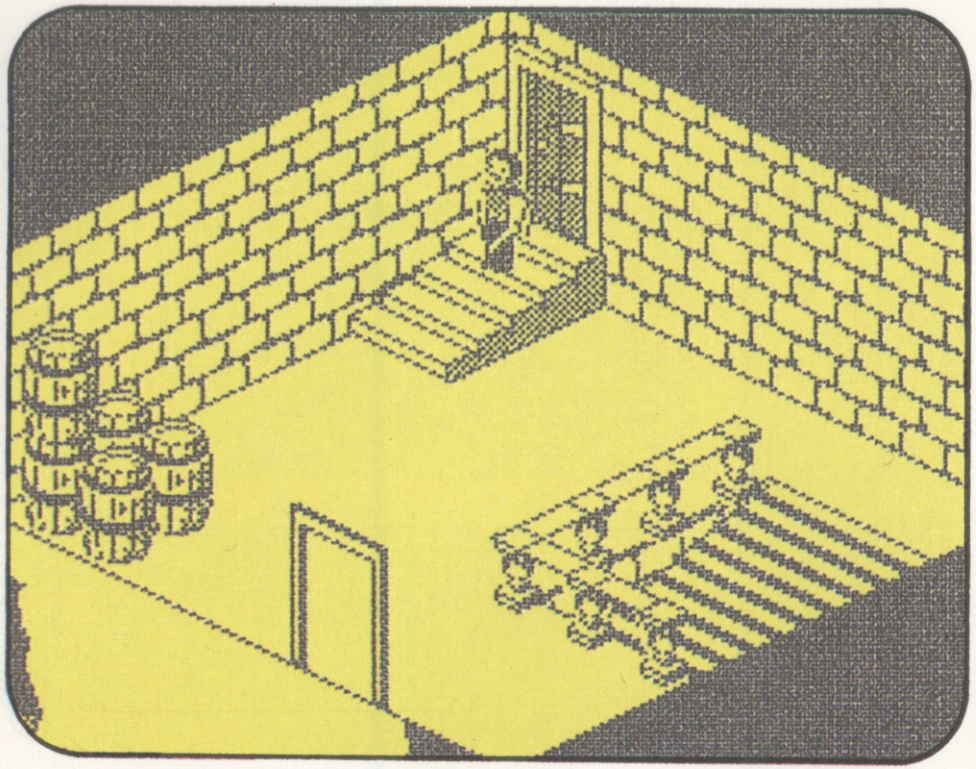
The plot is scarcely exceptional. The land of Elindor is blighted by the evil of the sorceror Sorderon. You play the Clint Eastwood character – the Un-named One – who frees the terrorised citizens by accomplishing a series of quests. The inhabitants of the land pursue their independent lives in real time and can be enlisted or fought depending on circumstance.

NIGHTSHADE

Ultimate

Latest in the saga of Sabre Man takes him into a haunted village. The 3D graphics of **Knight Lore** are juiced up further to display the streets of **Nightshade**, with colour and an ingenious transparent wall system to allow you to see into the narrow lanes.

Enter buildings and collect weapons to rid the village of the evil that infests it. Monsters run riot, and are in Ultimate's best grotesque tradition. **Nightshade** is fast, very much a zap game compared to recent offerings, and clearly another winner. A year ago, Ultimate reigned supreme – can the graphics wizards hold their place at the top? **Nightshade** makes it a close battle.



FAIRLIGHT
The Edge

Ultimate must be quaking in its boots at the sight of **Fairlight**, an arcade adventure owing much to **Knight Lore**'s revolutionary graphics.

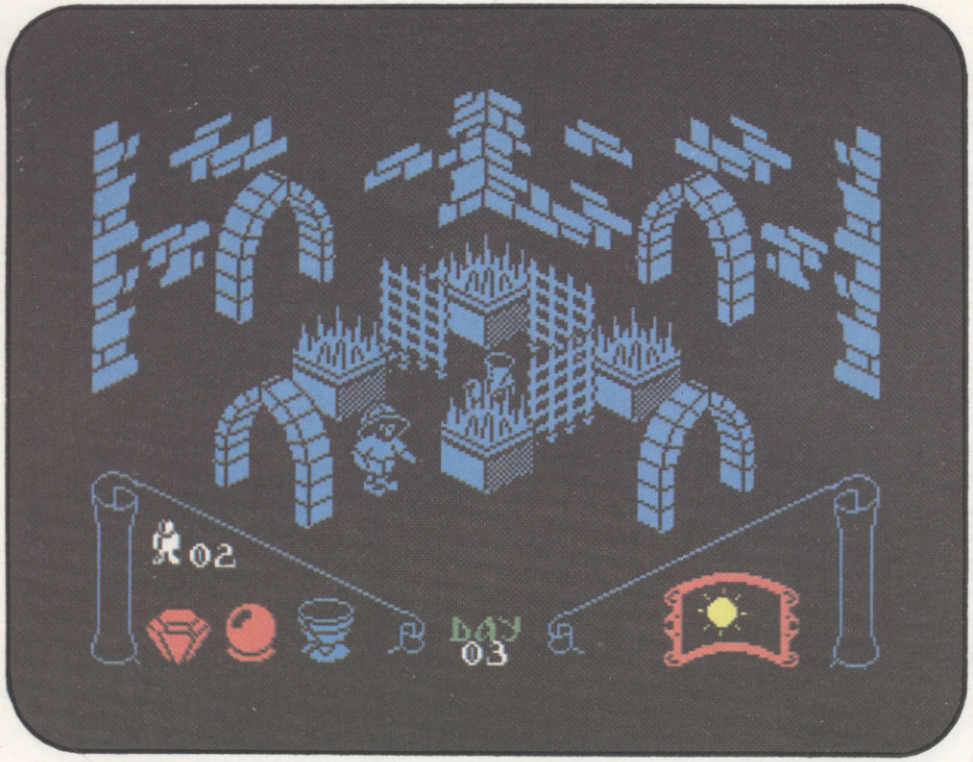
Set in a gigantic castle full of towers, dungeons, cellars, secret doors, courtyards and corridors, it's a simple tale of a hero who has to find a book of magic and get it to an imprisoned wizard. Monsters and guards seek to thwart him.

Bo Jangeborg's superb graphics system is supported by a combat system and intelligent use of objects, which can be pushed around the screen. Very realistic, very atmospheric – essential buying for lovers of the genre.

AVALON
Hewson

Billed as the first computer movie, **Avalon** sends apprentice magician Maroc on an underground quest for ancient wizardly power. It combines a novel graphics system with adventure elements to create a powerfully addictive quest.

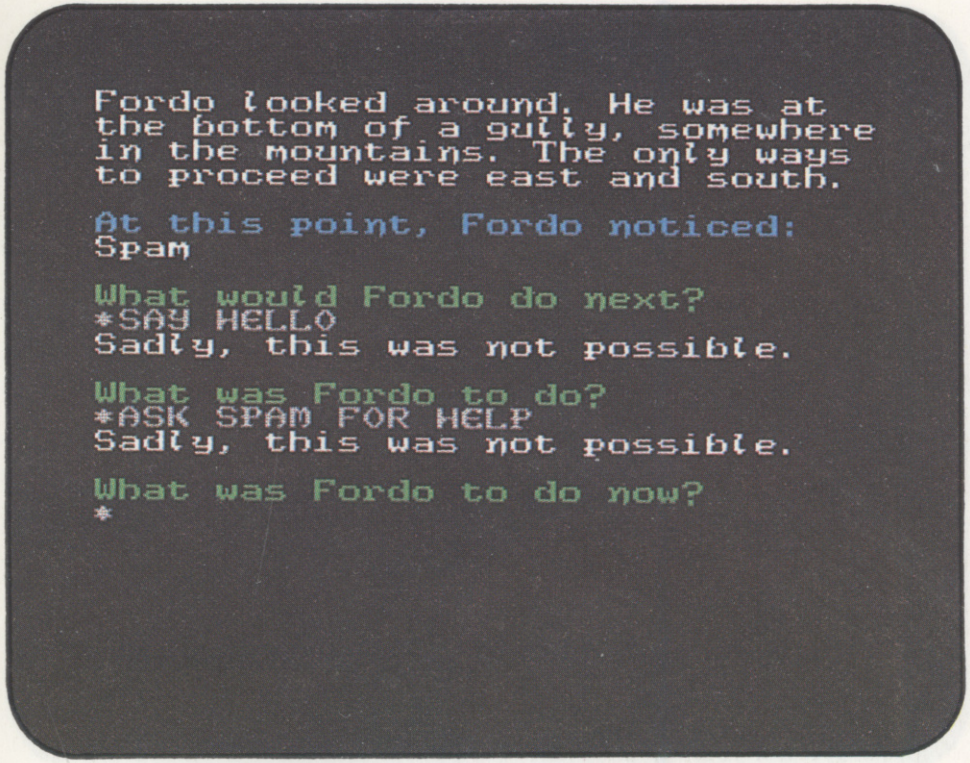
The sequel, **Dragontorc**, broadens the action to various parts of Arthurian Britain and introduces more characters – elves, skeletons and the like which may help or hinder. Doors visibly swing open, fireballs buzz through the air, and strange runes may be gathered to give access to new areas. The games are made by the energy-based spell system which gives depth to an enthralling epic.



KNIGHT LORE
Ultimate

Knight Lore represented a breakthrough in games software. The Ultimate team had taken 3D graphics a quantum leap further, combining the perspective of Quicksiva's **Ant Attack** with the stock solidity of the earlier Sabre Man adventures. The result was an attractive, minutely detailed, cartoon world in which you could push, slide, stack and climb objects with complete ease and absence of flicker. It was fiendishly difficult to play, too.

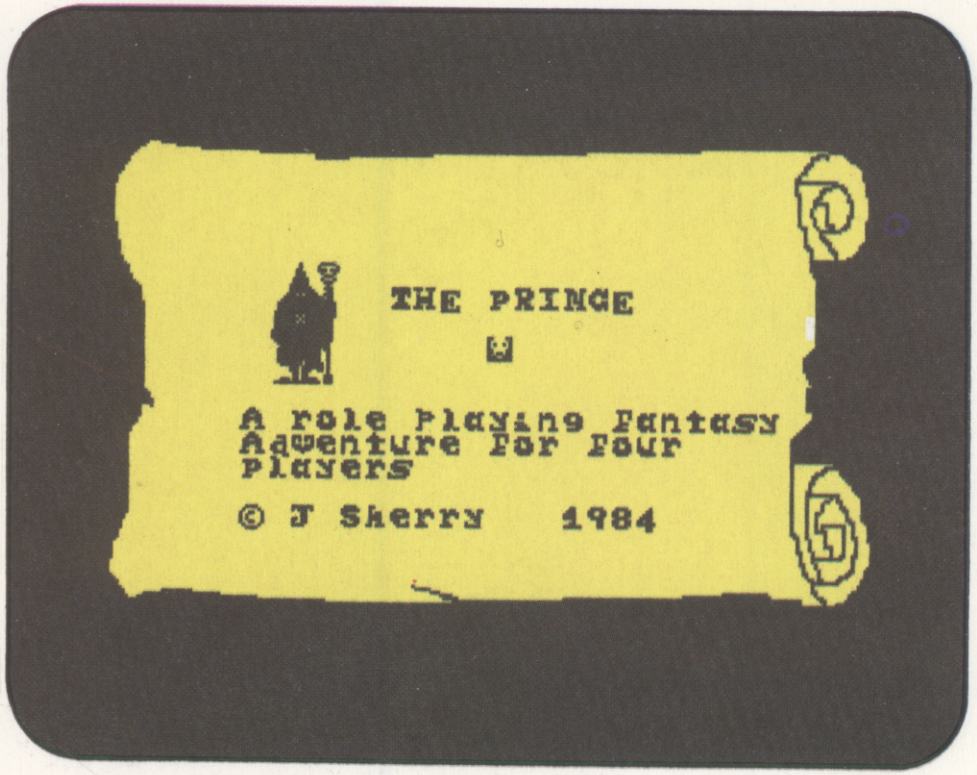
Alien 8, though possibly even more of an accomplishment in plot and puzzles, was unfairly criticised as being merely **Knight Lore** in space. That's the trouble with being the best software house in the country – you've a lot to live up to.


Fordo looked around. He was at the bottom of a gully, somewhere in the mountains. The only ways to proceed were east and south.
At this point, Fordo noticed:
Spam
What would Fordo do next?
*SAY HELLO
Sadly, this was not possible.
What was Fordo to do?
*ASK SPAM FOR HELP
Sadly, this was not possible.
What was Fordo to do now?
*

BORED OF THE RINGS
Delta 4/Silversoft

Cult humourist/programmer Fergus McNeill's apotheosis of satire, Bored is a three part epic based on Tolkien's venerable trilogy. The jokes are everything in this Quilled adventure, with Fordo the Boggit suckered into taking the great ring to the land of Dormor with his unsavoury friends Murky, Spam and Pimply.

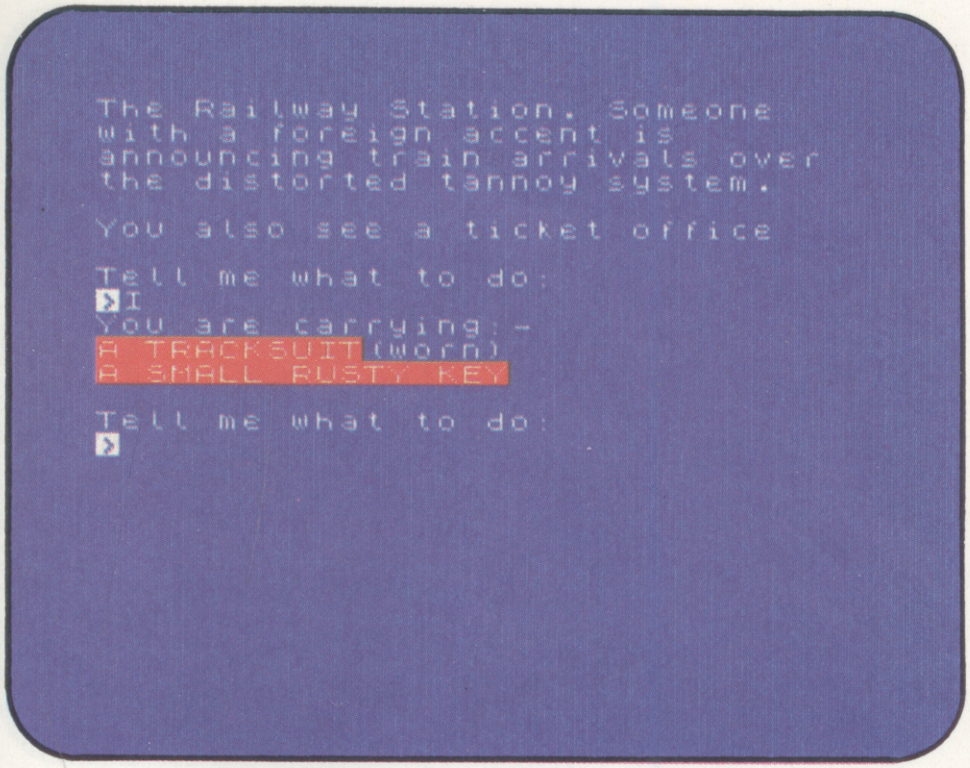
On the way, meet Hashberry the spaced-out river daughter, and try to work out where all the C5s are coming from. Fathom the mysteries of the Morona Caverns Tourist Complex, and suffer Aragont's interminable spouting about his obscure ancestry. Destined to become a real cult among adventure fans.



THE PRINCE
CCS

Multi-player computer games are frequently little more than glorified board games. **The Prince**, winner of the 1984 Cambridge Award, was the first to use the Spectrum's potential for hiding information from the human protagonists, creating a mood of mistrust and deceit.

All four players explore the gloomy and rambling castle seeking an audience with the shadowy Prince. Unreliable henchmen may be bribed to hinder or spy on your opponents, information and useful goods can be bought and sold, while off-screen devious alliances can be forged. Compulsive and evil entertainment, nothing quite like it has been released before or since.


The Railway Station. Someone with a foreign accent is announcing train arrivals over the distorted tannoy system.
You also see a ticket office
Tell me what to do:
>I
You are carrying:-
A TRACKSUIT (worn)
A SMALL RUSTY KEY
Tell me what to do:
>

HAMPSTEAD
Melbourne House

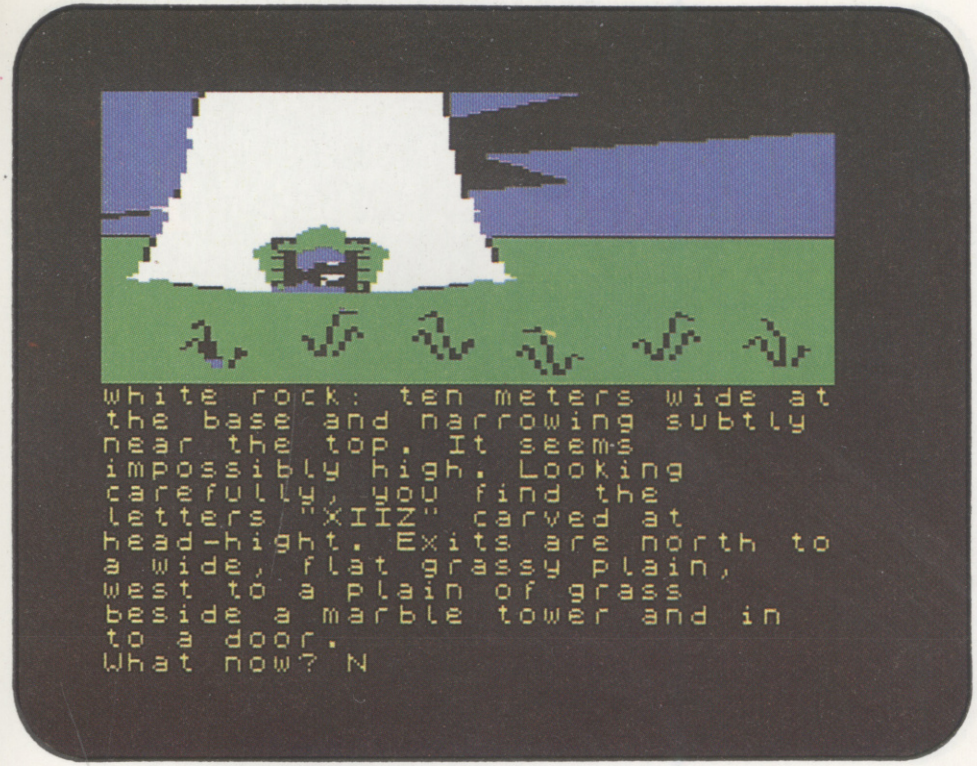
Why is a pure text adventure, written on the **Quill**, neither large nor complex, included in the classics of the last 12 months?

Hampstead is an extremely entertaining romp through the pretensions and social graces of the upper middle class. Armed only with a track suit and UB40, you aim to achieve the unobtainable and indefinable nirvana of NW3. Oxfam shops, industrial art, old school ties, jobs in merchant banking – all are steps up the social ladder and your success in climbing them relies on your ability to share the warped and satirical humour of the authors. Great fun.

TERRORMOLINOS
Melbourne House

After the intensive debunking given to the upper middle classes in **Hampstead**, authors Peter Jones and Trevor Levor took on the lower social orders in their venomous parody of the Spanish package holiday.

Terrormolinos is again a Quilled adventure, enlivened this time by graphics reminiscent of the saucy seaside postcards of Donald McGill. As well as surviving the sunburn, wine-tasting, food poisoning and bull-fighting on the Costa Packet, you must remember to record for posterity with your trusty camera the excrutiating accidents which befall you. You have only one film and every picture counts.


white rock: ten meters wide at
the base and narrowing subtly
near the top. It seems
impossibly high. Looking
carefully, you find the
letters "XIIZ" carved at
head-hight. Exits are north to
a wide, flat grassy plain,
west to a plain of grass
beside a marble tower and in
to a door.
What now? N

RED MOON
Level 9

Adventure specialists Level 9 pay homage to fantasy role-playing – particularly *Runequest* – in **Red Moon**. The accustomed 200 plus locations, poetically atmospheric text descriptions and multitude of illustrations are backed up with a combat and magic system.

Purists may scowl, but it all works very well, with nice touches such as the presence of iron negating spells. The problems are slightly easier than Level 9's usual brain-busters, making **Red Moon** a good one for less experienced adventurers – though it's no doddle. The standard plot – retrieve magic jewel before land is doomed – contains a few surprises, too.

System User Net #6752 **
POSTBOX
Enter message (Max 30 letters)
LETTER SENT RSVP ----------
1 for Menu - 2 to leave message
digit to X to disconnect

SYSTEM 15000
Craig Communications

A computer adventure in the truest sense, **System 15000** eschews sword and sorcery for the marvels of databases, networks, bulletin boards and electronic mail.

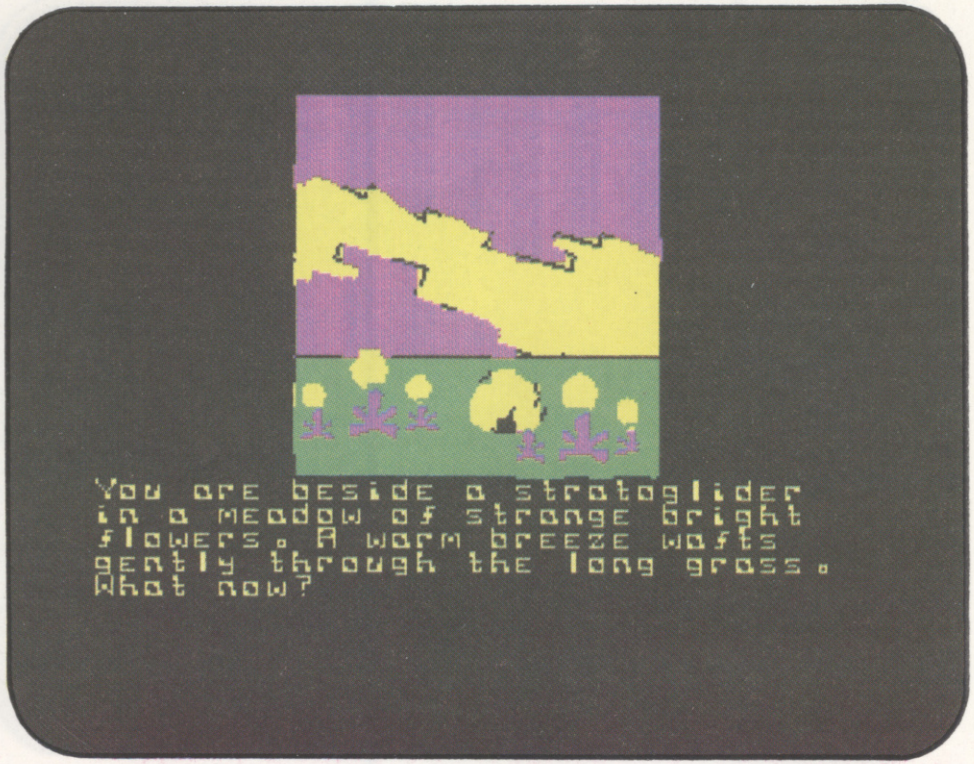
Using the resources of a high-powered network, your task is to investigate computer fraud involving $1½ million. Menus of bank exchange rates, flight departures, telephone numbers and confidential files chatter authentically across the screen as you crack one system after another, but your progress is monitored by persons unknown, who will suddenly activate a system shutdown to tighten security.

Totally realistic and totally absorbing, **System 15000** is a seductive glimpse into the raw-eyed, late night world of the hacker.

THE RATS
Hodder and Stoughton

James Herbert's best-selling horror pulp is translated here, in all it's gory detail, to the Spectrum screen. A blend of strategy and adventure, you must oversee the defence of London against the squealing invaders, hoping your scientists come up with some answers before it's too late.

Everything is icon driven in best modern fashion. In between bouts of strategy, mini-adventures take you through scenes from the book with other characters. Success helps final victory, but there are plenty of chances for the rodents to leap through the screen if you slip up. Absolutely horrible, highly atmospheric.

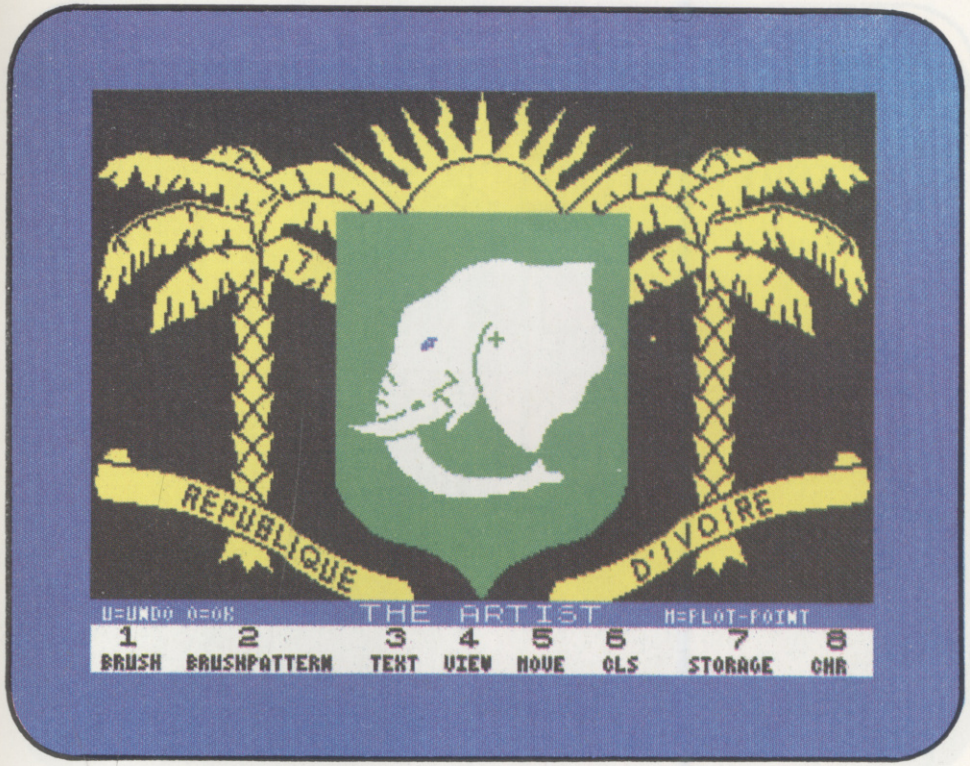

You are beside a stratoglider
in a meadow of strange bright
flowers. A warm breeze wafts
gently through the long grass.
What now?

RETURN TO EDEN
Level 9

The second in the Silicon Dreams trilogy, **Return to Eden** takes off where **Snowball** finished, finding heroine Kim Kimberley lost on a planet overrun with lethal plant life and rogue robots.

Displaying all the hallmarks of Level 9 – intricate plotting, fine attention to detail, atmospheric scene-setting, and brain scrambling problems – **Return to Eden** also features graphics for each of the 250 locations, created using a compressor technique written by author Pete Austin.

When the third part, **Worm in Paradise**, is released, Level 9 will have completed what is, to date, the only serious amalgam of computer adventure and science fiction.

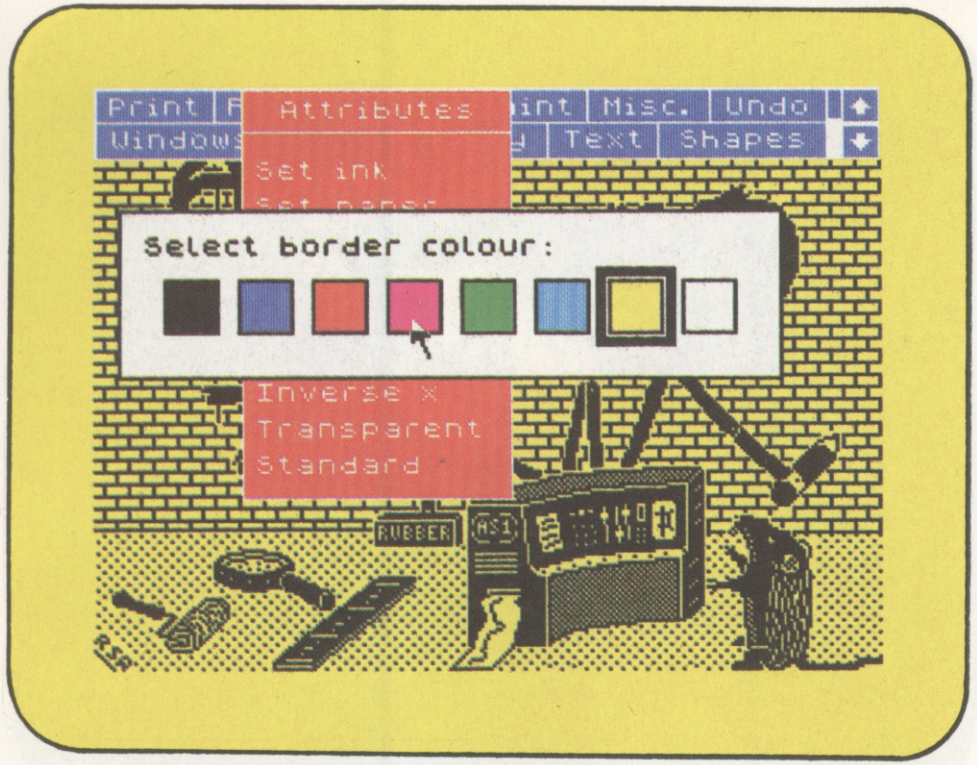


THE ARTIST
Softechnics

A graphics design package which can only be compared with **Art Studio**, from OCP. Using a number-scaled menu at the bottom of the screen, you can draw all types of shapes using the point, line, circle and arc commands. Shapes can be filled using a large number of different paint brushes, and blocks of user-defined texture can be used to fill parts of the screen.

Cut out and paste up facilities are available, which allow you to take a part of the screen display and put it into another position. A user-defined graphics routine is also included and animates any sequence of characters.

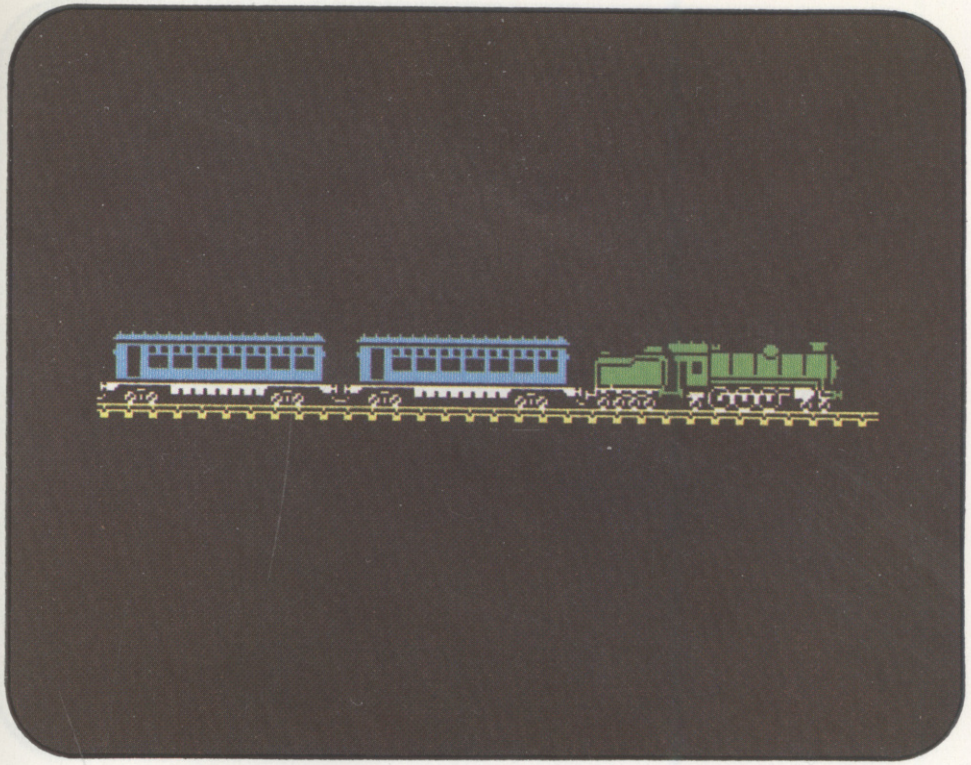
The Artist provides complete control over the Spectrum screen, something which other packages have been unable to do.



ART STUDIO
OCP

While **Art Studio** provides all the facilities of Softechnics' **Artist**, it is controlled by a series of pull down menus, operated using an arrow cursor. It will only draw in black and white although the fill textures, of which there are more pre-defined than **The Artist**, can have colours attributed to them.

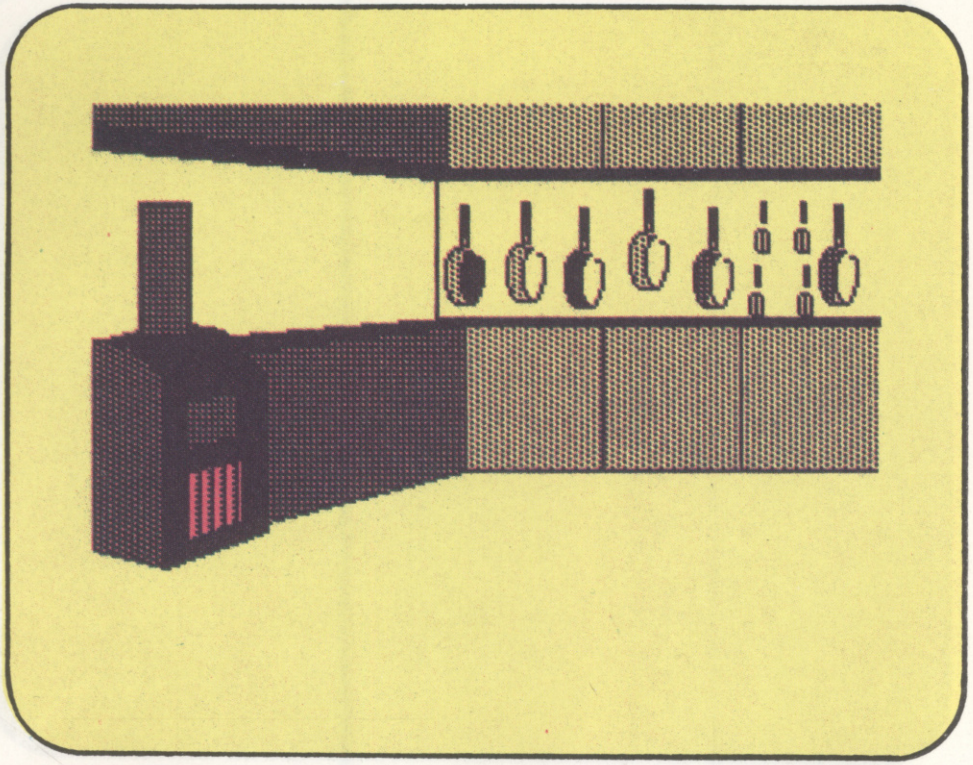
The package is very versatile in terms of storage and control. The cursor can be moved using a joystick or a Kempston mouse which turns the Spectrum into an Apple Mackintosh. It can be purchased on disc and will run with most combinations of tape, microdrive and disc.



WHITE LIGHTNING
Ocean

The lightning fast graphics of the games designer are produced with the package's special language, based on Forth. The language provides all the commands necessary to produce animated sprite characters such as space ships, pac-men and laser bases. It can also be used to create the backdrop screen of a game, be it stars in space or a city.

The results may be impressive but construction of a wide variety of games is easy. The package was originally launched by Oasis at a time when games earned programmers star status. It was one of the reasons for its success.



THE ILLUSTRATOR
Gilsoft

Superb high resolution graphics can be created with this companion to **The Quill** text adventure game designer.

The package adds graphic screens to **Quill** output. Design is accomplished with two cursors and a variety of mode menus which allow the creation of lines, arcs, points, colour and texture.

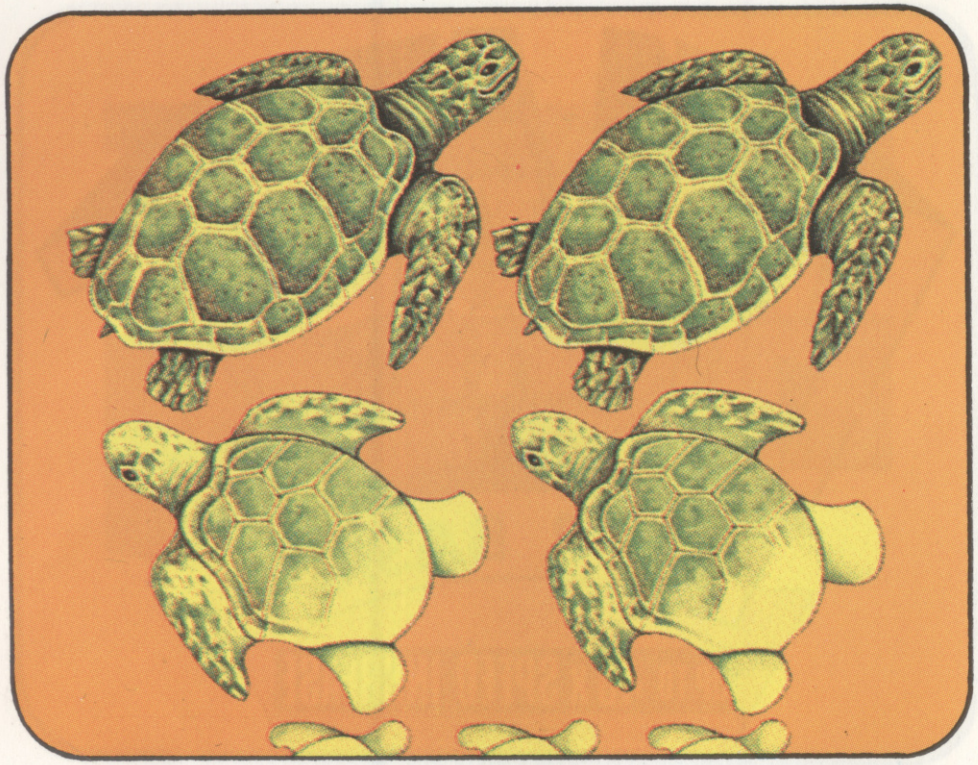
The Illustrator is a unique utility and gives Quilled games added depth, and a screen format made famous by **The Hobbit**. Several professional software houses have used both packages, including Delta 4 with **Bored of the Rings**. A greater compliment could not be paid to such an excellent package.

BLAST
OCS

While a number of companies have brought out Basic compilers during the past three years, **Blast** knocks out the competition.

Its most notable opponents were the **FP Compiler** from Softek and **MCODER II** from PSS. The PSS package would only deal with integer values and could not handle arrays or strings in an easy manner. While the **FP Compiler** could handle floating point numbers, as well as integers, it produced slow running code and could not handle arrays properly.

Blast can compile all Basic commands and produces an extremely fast object code which can be run from a Basic loader program. It is the only product on the market which can truly bear the stamp of compiler.

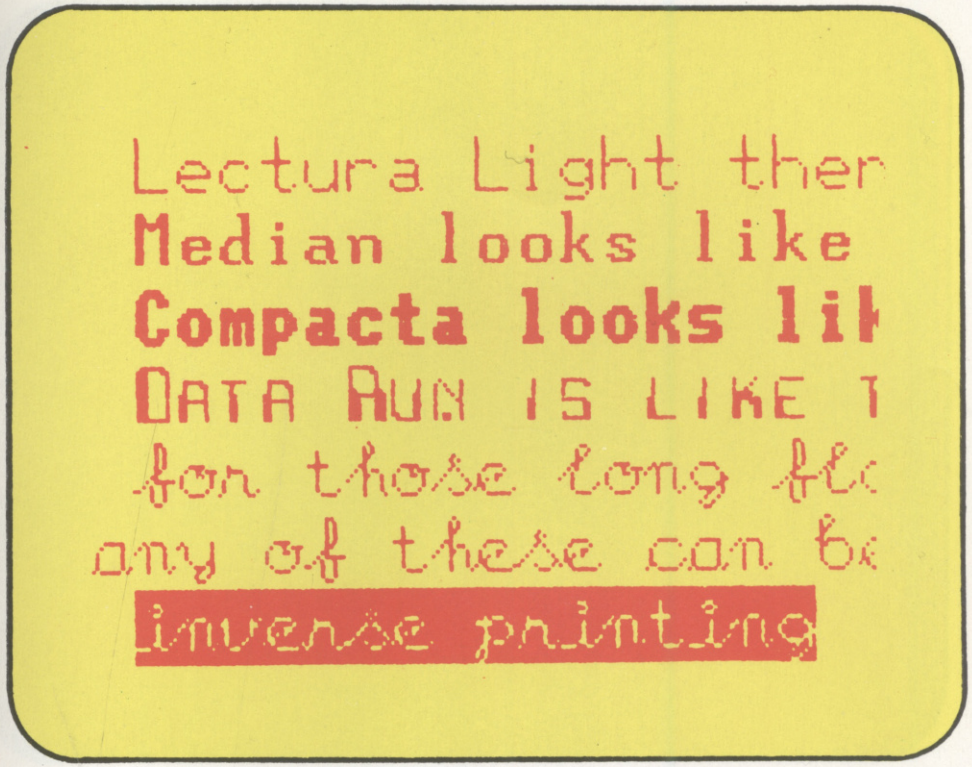


SINCLAIR LOGO
Sinclair Research

One of the best and least expensive **Logo** packages available for any machine. It was written for Sinclair by LCSI and provides a full version of Seymour Papert's **MIT Logo**.

The language was developed for use by children. It is attractive because of its ability to draw simple or complex shapes on the screen using a pen called a Turtle. A robotic device may also be controlled by **Logo**. The robot, called a floor turtle, will draw the shapes on paper rather than the screen.

Although several companies, notably CP Software, have brought out versions of **Logo** the Sinclair package is the official version. It is also the fastest and easiest to use.

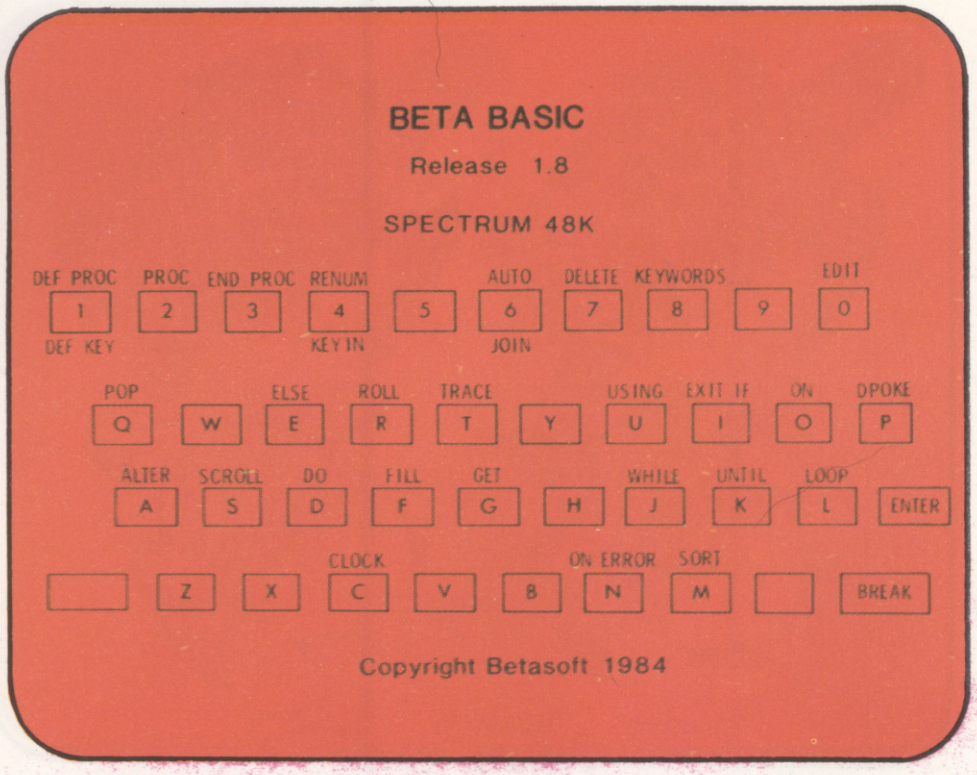


TASPRINT
Tasman Software

A number of Tasman utilities have followed the famous **Tasword** wordprocessor onto the market and **Tasprint** is one.

The package provides all you will require for doing printouts on the Spectrum. It offers five types of print styles. The first is Compacta which provides a bold, heavy print. Data-Run produces a futuristic, computer style display, while Lectura Light is thin and easy to read. Median is for all business users and Palace Script is in a handwritten style.

Tasprint is compatible with Epson, Brother, Shinwa and NEC printers. It is the best font program on the market, and is also available for the QL.



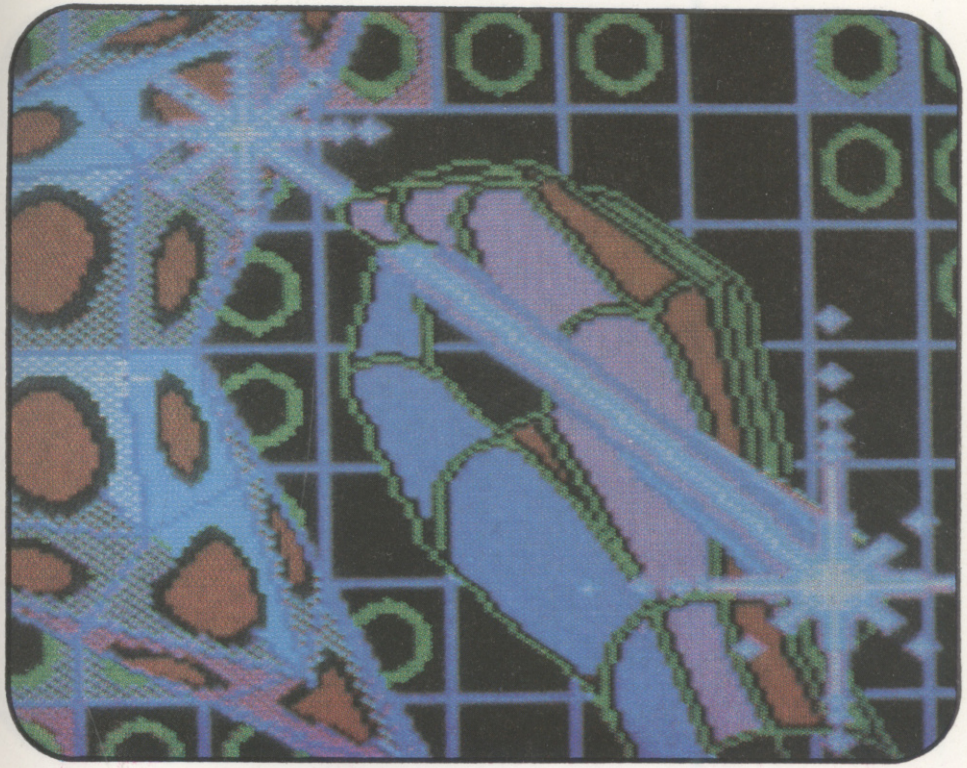
BETA BASIC
Betasoft

An alternative Basic language for the Spectrum which offers more than the standard ZX Basic.

As well as providing all the Sinclair commands, it also has a number of commands available from BBC Basic. BBC Basic commands include extensions to FOR . . .NEXT loops, and new control structures such as WHILE . . .WEND and IF . . .THEN . . .ELSE.

Beta Basic provides utilities such as decimal . hexadecimal and binary number base conversions, extensions to graphics and sound, and a Trace facility which tracks down errors in programs.

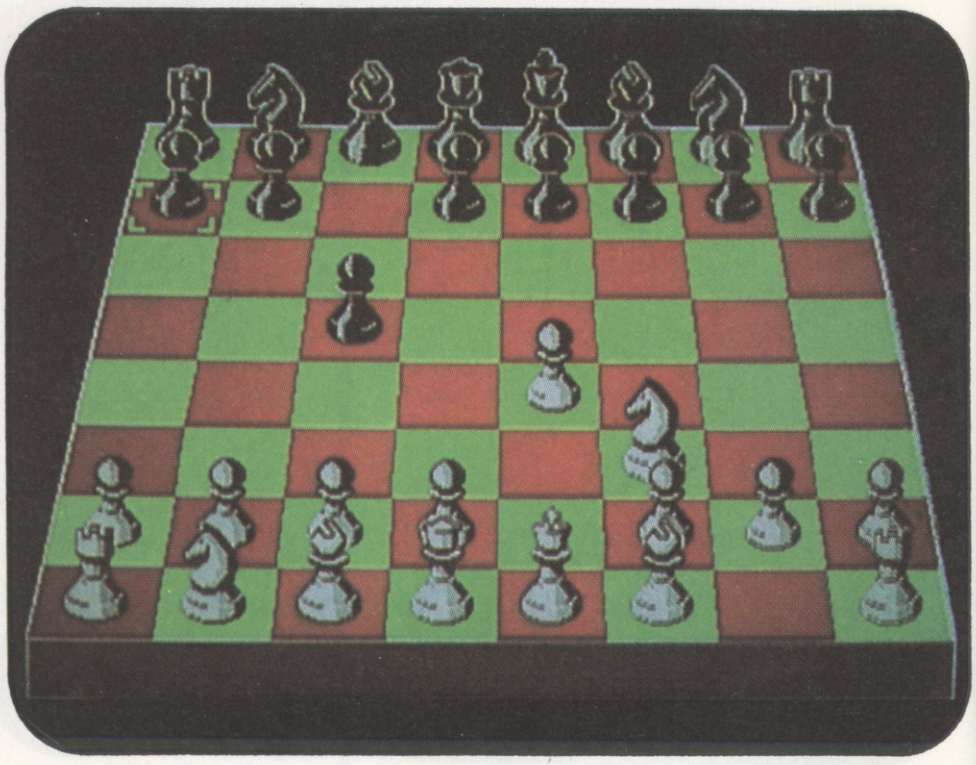
The language, which is available on cassette or microdrive, is successful because it is continually changing and getting better.



GRAPHIQL
Talent

Talent is one of the very few software houses to take the QL seriously, and **GraphiQL** proves it. An excellent graphics package, it offers full rubber-band design for boxes and circles, magnification and panning for detailed work on individual pixels, user-definable paintbrush, airbrush effects, textures and all the usual draw, circle, fill and colour commands. There's even a sketchpad facility for developing patterns.

It's reasonably fast and easy to use. Included are demo screens and a remarkably clear instruction book.



QL CHESS
Psion

The first non-business non-utility program for the QL and still a masterpiece. Very fast – 14 moves in the first second at lowest level – and very strong, winning the European micro chess championships.

All the usual features and well implemented – hints, problem solving mode, and a facility to watch the QL considering various lines of play.

Best of all is an alternative 3D display of the board, occupying the whole screen and showing off the power of QL processing very effectively. Currently the finest chess program for any home computer; essential for any QL owner whose machine doesn't sit in an office all day.

WITH THE

CARTRIDGE DOCTOR

FROM

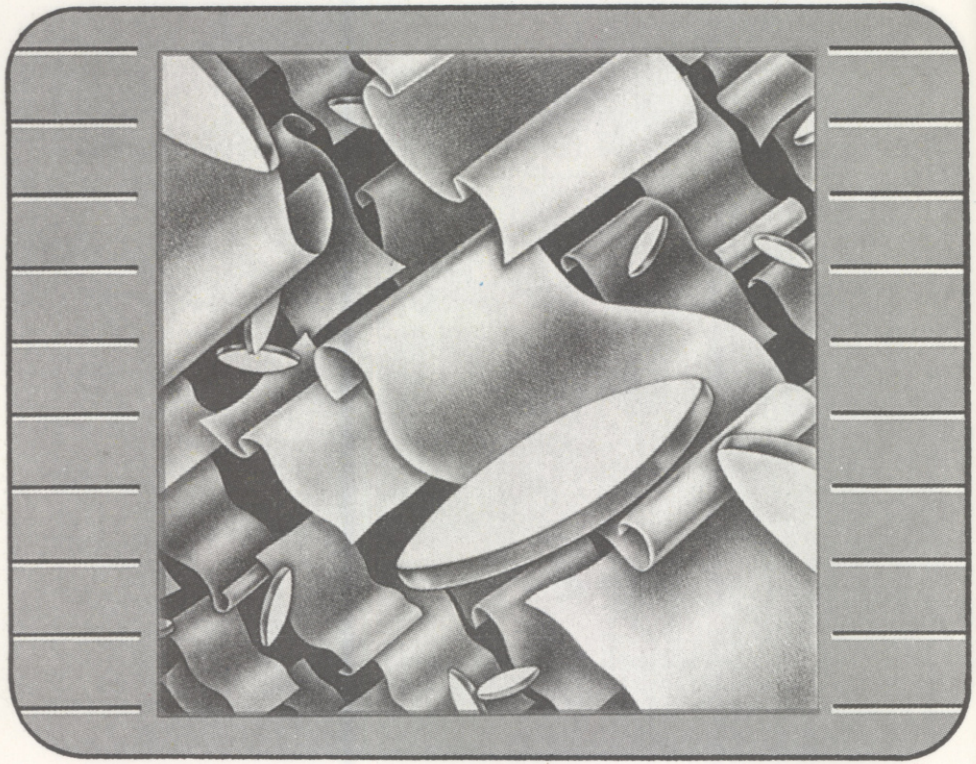
TALENT
COMPUTER SYSTEMS

CARTRIDGE DOCTOR
Talent

Everyone knows of the trouble which microdrives can cause if they are corrupted. It may be all right if you lose your favourite game but if all your accounts are corrupted, you could be in serious trouble.

The **Cartridge Doctor** will mend scrambled file headers, correct word processor documents and even get machine code up and running again.

The corrupted files are loaded into the program which then displays their ASCII representation on screen. Any errors can be changed on screen using a cursor, and the amended file saved onto microdrive. The utility also provides a fast back-up facility which checks for errors in files.



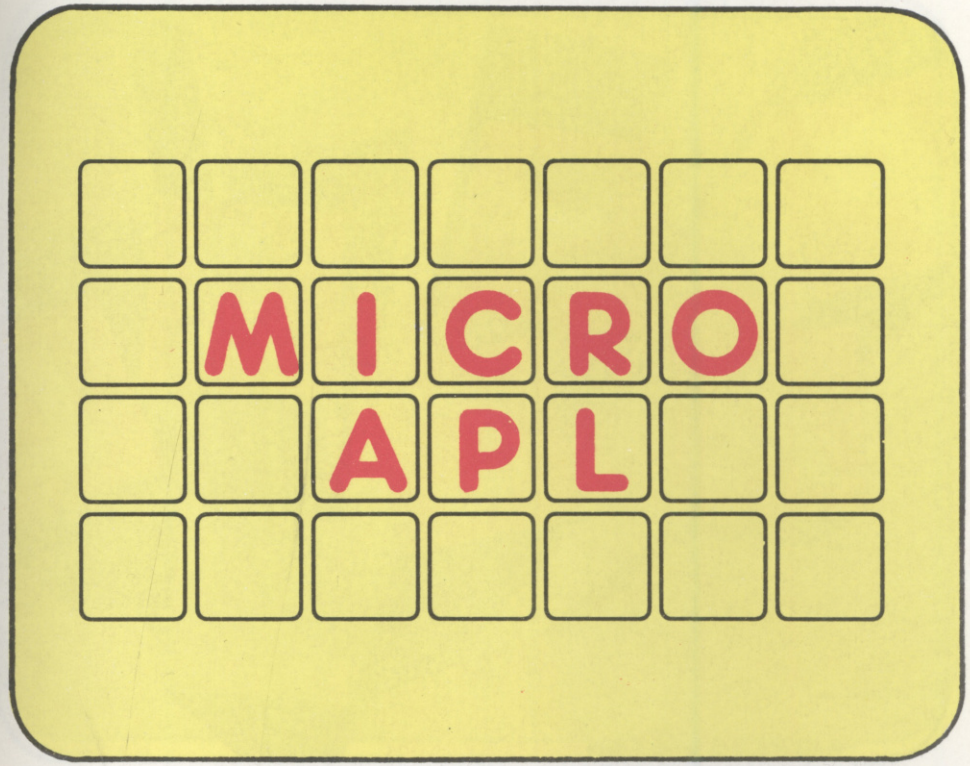
CASH TRADER
Sinclair Research

Designed to help keep the books and financial reports for small companies **Cash Trader** is a flexible accounting package for the QL.

It is ideal for the businessman who knows nothing about computers and wants to know as little as possible. Its data entry system is simple to use and help is on the screen at all times.

Although the accompanying manual is 200 pages it provides instant information about most problems which are likely to occur when using the program.

A **Cash Trader** support club is available for users who need help. It produces a newsletter and pamphlets which give details of enhancements and information about specific problems.



MICROAPL
MicroAPL

A powerful numeric language for the QL. Not only will it do calculations on single values, it will also operate on tables of numbers providing the answers to hundreds of sums in a fraction of a second.

Its main use is in the classroom or in scientific establishments. It can be used for maths modelling, sampling techniques, equation solving, and even for teaching children the method behind number theory.

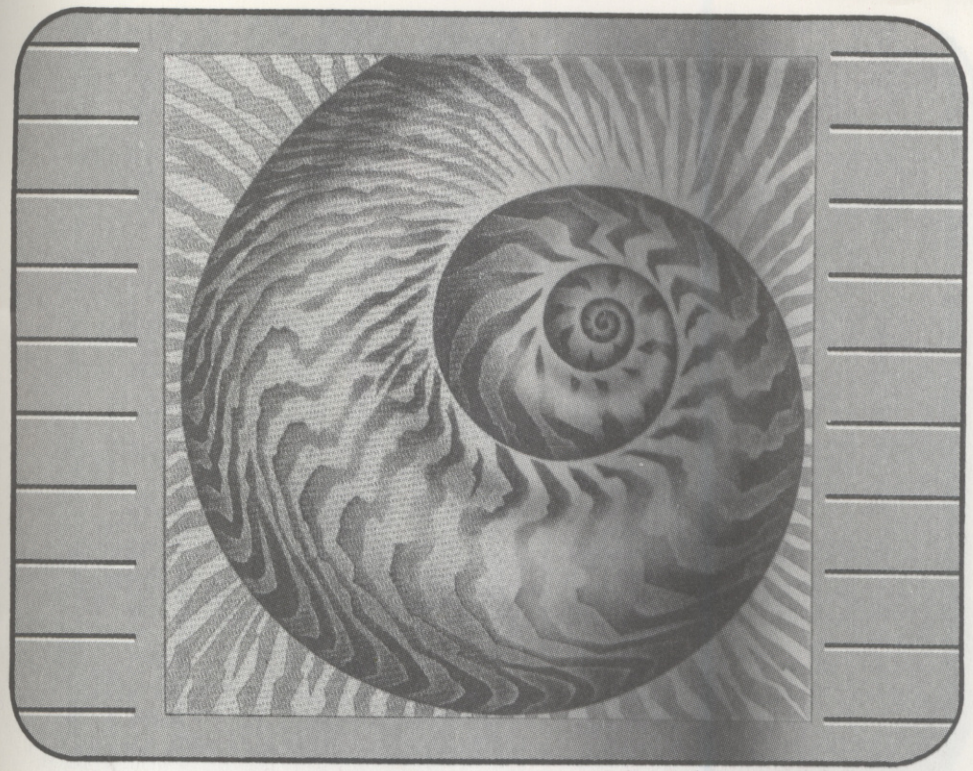
Also included within the package is a complete tutorial on **MicroAPL** together with a history of its use. Although it has been maligned by QL owners, it demonstrates the numeric power of the machine in a way which has never been seen before.

PASCAL DEVELOPMENT KIT *Metacomco*

The only version of Pascal on the QL to obtain an ISO standard of certification, and the first QL utility to receive a *Sinclair User* Classic.

It provides a full version of Pascal which is compiled into true 68000 and not P-code. The package also provides library routines to enable the use of the QL graphics and sound facilities. As with all the Metacomco products, it is exceptional value for money.

The documentation provided with the product is excellent, ensuring that a beginner in the language can get as much out of it as an expert. For registered users there is also user back-up from the company if problems should occur.



QL TOOLKIT *Sinclair Research*

The first useful utility for the QL from Sinclair Research, written by Tony Tebby, author of QDOS.

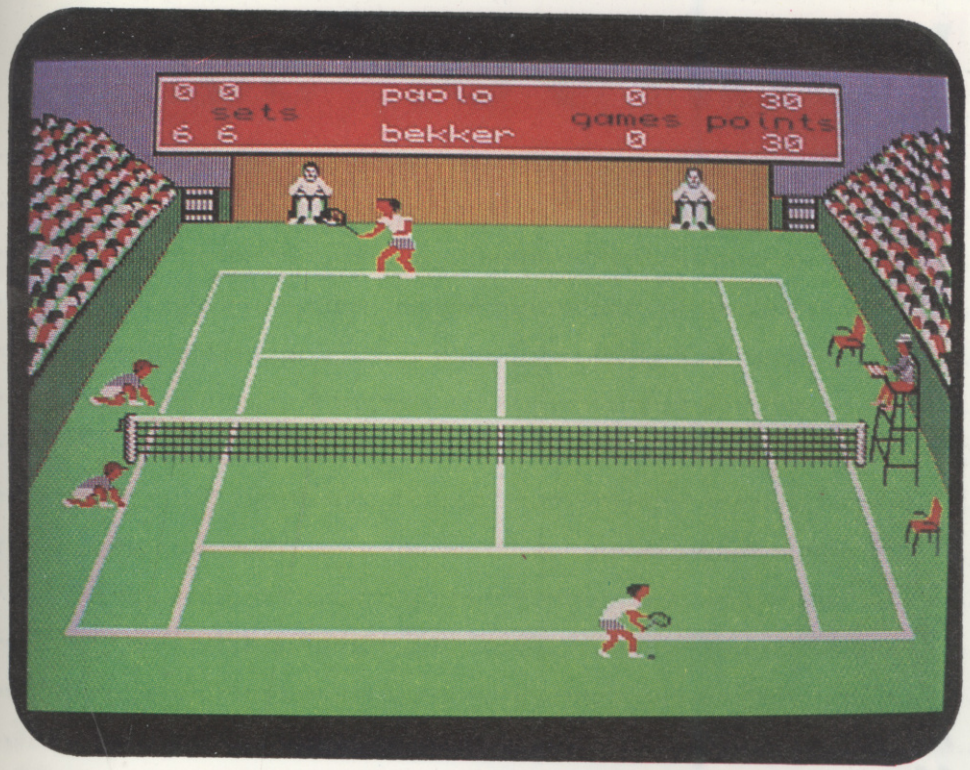
It includes a core routine which is entered into the resident procedures area of the machine, and some utilities written in SuperBasic. The core includes commands which provide communication with QDOS, inform you on the status of jobs and organise memory. The SuperBasic routines include a selection of quick back-up procedures and a multi-tasked digital clock.

The core of the package has since been used by disc manufacturers to provide utilities for their systems. It provides easy access to the power of QDOS, and makes the control and initiation of tasks easier.

ASSEMBLER DEVELOPMENT KIT *Metacomco*

The most powerful assembler on the market for the QL. Source code is typed into the full screen editor which can be used to enter Basic programs or any type of ASCII file. The editor does not bring errors in the source to your attention but does provide powerful error correction facilities. It can be multi-tasked so you can work on several files at the same time.

The assembler is a three-pass package, loaded independently from the editor. Any errors in source code are noted and passed back to you at the end of an attempted assembly. If an error is found, the source can then be passed through the editor for correction.



QL MATCH POINT *Psion*

Psion wrote the business packages provided with the QL, so it's hardly surprising to see a conversion of the excellent Psion tennis simulation turning up.

Match Point is a marvellous game, overshadowed on the Spectrum by better-hyped games, but still the best sporting simulation around. Control of the ball is very sophisticated – you can lob, smash, volley, and put a spin on the ball by altering the timing and direction of your swing. A shadow helps judge the height of the ball, but the computer is a hard opponent nevertheless. Still, you wouldn't expect to last long at Wimbledon, would you?

YOUR TOP 50

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